

Assignment: Vancouver

Tourism Vancouver's 2016 Media Kit



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BACKGROUND

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS VANCOUVER?

Almost exactly halfway between Europe and the Asia Pacific region, Vancouver is on the west coast mainland of North America. It is in the southwest corner of British Columbia – the westernmost of Canada’s 10 provinces and three territories.

An easy hop by car, train or plane, it is only 38 kilometres (24 miles) north of the U.S. border and 96 kilometres (60 miles) northeast of Victoria, the B.C. capital, located across the Strait of Georgia on the southern tip of Vancouver Island.

Metro Vancouver, covering 2,930 square kilometres (1,130 square miles) and home to more than two million residents, comprises 24 local authorities, one of which is the City of Vancouver. Others include Burnaby, New Westminster, Richmond and Surrey. Across the Burrard Inlet, the North Shore area includes the communities of North Vancouver and West Vancouver.

VANCOUVER: GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

Bordered on its northwestern edge by spectacular Stanley Park – one of North America’s largest downtown green spaces – Vancouver’s compact city centre is surrounded on three sides by water, with Burrard Inlet to the north, False Creek to the south and English Bay to the west. Several nearby neighbourhoods radiate from this downtown core, including Gastown, Chinatown, Yaletown, the West End and Granville Island. Nearby East Vancouver encompasses the Main Street and Commercial Drive communities while the West Side features beach-studded Kitsilano.

Easy to navigate, Vancouver’s main thoroughfares generally follow a user-friendly grid pattern: streets run north to south and avenues run east to west. The avenues, for the most part, are numbered – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. – and the streets are named. Broadway is the main exception to the avenue numbering rule – it should be 9th Avenue.

VANCOUVER’S TIMELINE

Surprisingly, the city’s name derives indirectly from the Dutch – British Royal Navy Captain George Vancouver’s ancestors hailed from Coeverden in northeast Holland. His grandfather was John Jasper van Coeverden. In Dutch, Coeverden means “cow crossing.” Here, in a nutshell, are other highlights of the region’s rich history.

10,000-8,000 BC: Segments of the Coast Salish people – ancestors of the Squamish, Burrard, Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam (Xw'muthk'i'um), Tsawwassen, Coquitlam (Kwayhquitlam), Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations – begin settling

the area. They find the beaches and forests teeming with tasty wildlife and they name English Bay "Ayyulshun", which means "soft under feet."

1779-1774 AD: Spanish naval expeditions nose around the region, part of the country's attempts to claim the west coast of North America by virtue of the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. Their presence is still felt today in Vancouver street names like Cordova, Cardero and Valdez.

1779: Searching for the Northwest Passage, Captain James Cook briefly hits the area. On board his ship is a navigator named George Vancouver.

1792: Now captain of his own Royal Navy vessel, Vancouver returns and spends a few hours on dry land – long enough to meet Spanish captains Valdez and Galiano who confirm Spain's claim on the area. The spot where they meet is now called Spanish Banks.

1808: Simon Fraser, explorer and fur trader, arrives via a challenging overland route from Eastern Canada, taking a river he thought was the Columbia. Even though he was wrong, the river he paddled was still named after him.

1827: Hudson's Bay Company builds Fort Langley, a trading post on the Fraser River. The company's flagship Vancouver department store has occupied a prime downtown location at the corner of Georgia and Granville Streets since 1893.

1858: The news of gold discoveries on the banks of the Fraser raises a little interest. About 25,000 pickaxe-wielding visitors drop by for a look.

1867: A talkative English chap named John "Gassy Jack" Deighton opens a saloon for thirsty forestry workers near the Burrard Inlet shoreline. It becomes so popular that a community develops around it and names itself "Gastown."

1870: Gastown is incorporated as the town of Granville.

1884: The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) moves its terminal from the head of Burrard Inlet to what's now known as Coal Harbour, triggering a new wave of development around the fledgling townsite.

1886: With a population around 1,000, Granville incorporates as the City of Vancouver. The first mayor is realtor M.A. McLean. On June 13, a brush fire spirals out of control and quickly burns the fledgling city to the ground. McLean, knowing the value of real estate, sparks the rebuilding program in a matter of days.

1887: A CPR train rumbles into Vancouver. But it's not just any old train. Canada's first transcontinental passenger rail service, the shiny locomotive is now on proud display at Yaletown's Roundhouse Community Centre. Many of those who built the line came from China and lived in Vancouver's Chinatown area – still one of North America's largest.

1888: Stanley Park, named after an English Lord who also gave his name to hockey's top trophy, is officially opened. Decades later, its perimeter seawall trail is completed, becoming one of the city's iconic attractions.

1889: The first Granville Bridge is completed. A second incarnation was built in 1909. The one standing now is the third, built in 1954.

1891: The city's first tram-based public transit system, the Interurban, begins running.

1898: Sand is added to English Bay beach, making it popular with bathers. A large rock on the beach separates men and women (no peeking!). The Nine O'Clock Gun is placed at Brockton Point – and it still booms every evening.

1900: Vancouver surpasses the provincial capital of Victoria in size. Did they immediately move the capital to Vancouver? Nope.

1906: Vancouver's population hits 50,000 and a grand new courthouse, designed by Francis Rattenbury, is built. It now houses the Vancouver Art Gallery.

1908: The University of British Columbia (UBC) opens for business. There are now more than 46,000 students at the verdant waterfront campus.

1910: The 13-storey Dominion Trust Building, the city's first skyscraper, opens at Hastings and Cambie Streets. Quickly surpassed by taller buildings, it still retains its architectural elegance and is one of the city's finest heritage structures.

1911: Canada's first artificial ice rink opens and the Vancouver Millionaires – the city's first hockey team – move in, becoming Western Hockey League champions by 1915.

1920: Vancouver outgrows Winnipeg, Western Canada's main city. The locals celebrate by instituting a new tradition that still takes place today: New Year's Day polar bear swim at English Bay – the perfect January 1st hangover cure.

1925: The first Second Narrows Bridge connects the city with North Vancouver. The one there now is the second incarnation, opened in 1960.

1929: The Commodore Ballroom, built in sumptuous Art Deco style by architect H.H. Gillingham, opens to the dance-loving public.

1936: Art Deco styling also shapes the new City Hall, opened at 12th Avenue and Cambie.

1938: The Guinness family completes the Lions Gate Bridge, enabling access from the city to the large swathe of real estate the family is developing on the

North Shore. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth officially dedicate the span in 1939.

1954: Vancouver's British Empire and Commonwealth Games features the "Miracle Mile" with Roger Bannister and John Landy both breaking the four-minute mark for the first time. It was the first sports event televised in all of North America.

1959: A busy year. The city's first shopping mall – Oakridge Centre – opens, as does the Queen Elizabeth Theatre and Vancouver Maritime Museum.

1964: The B.C. Lions win the Canadian Football League's Grey Cup for the first time.

1970: The Vancouver Canucks play their first National Hockey League game, winning against the Los Angeles Kings. They've yet to lift the trophy named after Lord Stanley of Stanley Park fame.

1974: The heritage steam locomotive Royal Hudson logs its first run since being rebuilt. The train is now preserved at Squamish's West Coast Railway Heritage Park.

1977: SeaBus passenger ferry service between the North Shore and downtown Vancouver launches. A third vessel is added to the fleet in 2011.

1979: The Vancouver Whitecaps win the now-defunct North American Soccer League. The team returned to top-division Major League Soccer in 2011.

1983: BC Place Stadium, Vancouver's biggest sports and concert venue, opens. Later hosting the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, it was massively upgraded in 2011 and now hosts BC Lions and Vancouver Whitecaps games.

1985: SkyTrain launches, eventually linking suburban Surrey to downtown Vancouver via the Expo Line. The Millennium Line, linking to Burnaby and Coquitlam, opened in 2002, while the Canada Line service to Richmond and the airport opened in 2009.

1986: Vancouver's centennial is marked by the transport-themed Expo '86 world exposition. A huge success, it puts Vancouver on the map internationally and triggers a wave of immigration applications.

1995: The grand Vancouver Public Library, shaped like the Colosseum, slides open its glass doors for the first time. Nearby, a state-of-the-art NHL hockey venue flickers into life. Now called Rogers Arena, it's home to the Vancouver Canucks and top-notch music concerts.

2003: Vancouver is selected as host city for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

2009: A major expansion to the Vancouver Convention Centre opens, tripling the capacity of the original Canada Place venue. The green, grass-roofed West Building is Canada's largest waterfront convention centre.

2010: The region enthusiastically hosts the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in February and March. More than 2.5 billion people around the world tune in to watch 2,600 athletes from 82 nations compete. The highlight for Canadians? Winning the men's hockey gold medal.

2011: Vancouver celebrates its 125th birthday with a year-long party of events and performances taking place throughout the city.

2015/16: Vancouver steadily grows its reputation as a major event city by hosting a number of internationally lauded events, including FIFA Women's World Cup, Rugby Sevens, and the TED Conference.

Story idea:

Even though it's a relatively new city, as the timeline above shows, Vancouver has a colourful past – and much of it can be explored by visitors.

Consider a story that illuminates this easily accessible heritage for history-minded travellers. You could include visits to Gastown (where the city began), Hastings Mill Store Museum (Vancouver's oldest structure), Spanish Banks, the Museum of Vancouver and Roedde House Museum. Consider interviewing and walking around the city with a local historian.

POLITICALLY SPEAKING

Governing via its own Vancouver Charter, the city's administration (www.vancouver.ca) comprises a mayor, city council and a professional bureaucracy. The mayor is the chief administrative official and is elected separately from the 10 city councillors. All are elected for three-year terms. Vancouver's imposing City Hall is located at the intersection of 12th Avenue and Cambie Street.

The city is a key member of the wider Metro Vancouver regional authority (www.metrovancouver.org), an organization of cities and municipalities that coordinates common services. TransLink (www.translink.ca) administers the region's transportation system – including roads, bridges and public transit.

In addition, the Government of B.C. (www.gov.bc.ca) has jurisdiction over Vancouver and the rest of the province from its Victoria base on Vancouver Island, while the Government of Canada (www.canada.gc.ca), located across the country in Ottawa, is responsible for federal political issues.

Extra!

Following the devastating Great Fire of 1886, the first meeting of Vancouver's

city council was held in a canvas tent at the north foot of Main Street. A makeshift sign attached to the tent read “City Hall.”

GREEN VANCOUVER ECO CAPITAL

B.C.'s biggest metropolis has been a hotbed of sustainability for decades, befitting the home of one of the world's largest urban parks and the historic spot where Greenpeace was founded in 1972 in Kitsilano. Already recognised as having the smallest carbon footprint of any major city in North America, Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson committed to making this “the world's greenest city” by 2020. The initiative covers issues of sustainability, liveability and urban planning for residents and businesses and aims to implement programs that will make Vancouver an eco-pioneer and green beacon for communities around the world. For more information, see www.vancouver.ca/greencapital.

Extra!

Vancouver is Canada's greenest city, according to a 2012 report by the Economist Intelligence Unit. The study, which also placed the city second in North America after San Francisco— but first for CO₂ and air quality — praised Vancouver's low carbon emissions, high number of LEED-certified buildings and the city's extensive “greenest city” action plan.

OCEAN WISE

Seafood is a Vancouver dining specialty, but not all aquatic dishes are created equally. Pioneered by Stanley Park's Vancouver Aquarium and by innovative chefs across the region, the popular Ocean Wise (www.oceanwise.ca) initiative launched in 2005 in Vancouver to support sustainable fishing practices and has now spread across Canada. It's an easy way to ensure that the seafood on your restaurant plate has been raised, sourced and supplied in an environmentally sound manner. Check menus for the Ocean Wise symbol, look at the website for a list of participating establishments and download the free iPhone app.

Story idea:

There are now more than 650 Ocean Wise partners across Canada with dozens of restaurants in Vancouver onboard with this sustainable seafood initiative. Consider a story highlighting the success of the program which began right here at the Aquarium in Stanley Park. The program's co-founders, chef Robert Clark and Mike McDermid now run The Fish Counter, Vancouver's first all-sustainable seafood store (thefishcounter.com) on Main Street, with a deliciously tempting take-out counter serving Baja fish tacos and gluten-free fish and chips.

GREEN TRANSPORTATION

Vancouver's commitment to green transportation is exemplified by the region's growing mass transit system. The original SkyTrain line opened in 1985, with a new line added in 2002. In 2009 – just in time for the 2010 Olympic and Paralymp-

pic Winter Games – the Canada Line was opened, linking the airport to downtown in a short, 25-minute trip. The next stage of this eco-minded transit network will be the Evergreen Line, scheduled to open in 2016.

But the city's green transport credentials are not just transit-related. Vancouver has one of the world's largest hybrid vehicle taxi fleets and has a network of bike lanes on downtown city centre streets. Car drivers have not been forgotten, though: the city now requires electric vehicle charging stations for 20 percent of all parking stalls in new condo buildings.

Vancouver car2go has the largest membership and fleet in North America with 95,000 members and 1275 vehicles. The city also has Zipcar, Modo and Evo carshare companies.

Story idea:

New for summer 2016 is Mobi Bikes. Vancouver's bike share program has a network of public bikes available at 150 easy-to-use docking stations across the city. Bikes can be used on daily or monthly passes; sign up via the website or on the mobile app (www.mobibikes.ca) The first 30 minutes of each ride is free. Where can you go in the city, and what can you see, in just 30 minutes?

Extra!

Opened in 2009, the Vancouver Convention Centre's West Building expansion is one of the greenest structures in Canada. A designated LEED Platinum building – the first convention centre in the world to earn the designation – it has a six-acre living grass roof, fish habitats built into its foundations and a seawater heating and cooling system. In addition, the building is surrounded by public art, including Douglas Coupland's 'Digital Orca', and is the permanent outdoor home of the 2010 Olympic Cauldron – which is still lit on special occasions.

STAY GREEN

Vancouver has a host of hotels designated under the global Green Key Eco-Rating Program as exemplifying great environmental stewardship. Only a few dozen hotels around the world have the coveted top-level Five Green Keys rating and in Vancouver these include Hyatt Regency Vancouver (www.vancouver.hyatt.com), Shangri La (www.shangri-la.com), the Listel Hotel (www.thelistelhotel.com), the Residence Inn by Marriott (<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/yvrdr-residence-inn-vancouver-downtown/>) and Four Seasons Vancouver (www.four-seasons.com/vancouver). In addition, 22 other local hotels have been awarded Four Green Keys. For listings, see www.greenkeyglobal.com.

Extra!

As part of its commitment to environmentally sustainable practices, the Fairmont Waterfront (<http://www.fairmont.com/waterfront-vancouver/>) sources herbs from its own rooftop garden, which also includes a honeybee apiary. The 2015 harvest bought in over 600lbs of honey from 250,000 resident honeybees, which forage over 12 square miles and bring back pollen from over 60 species of plants. The

bees visit more than one million flowers to make one pound of honey. The hotel uses the honey in their cocktails, desserts, salad dressings and signature Fairmont 'Stinger' lager, and its Bee Butler' Michael King has hosted over 1000 guests on summertime honeybee tours.

Story idea:

Vancouver has some of the world's greenest hotels. Cover this angle by sampling the eco-credentials of the Fairmont Waterfront (www.fairmont.com/waterfront), with its rooftop garden and free parking for hybrid and electric cars; the Listel Hotel (www.thelistelhotel.com), which uses solar-power and a heat recovery system; and the Opus Hotel (www.opushotel.com) with its extensive energy-saving and recycling programs.

Plus:

Add a "green day out in Vancouver" sidebar to your story, including visits to eco-attractions like Stanley Park's Lost Lagoon Nature House (www.stanleyparkecolony.ca) and the Capilano River Hatchery; a kayak tour with Ecomarine Ocean Kayak (www.ecomarine.com); and dinner in an Ocean Wise restaurant like Forage, which operates a zero waste policy with a fully sustainable menu (www.foragevancouver.com). And don't miss Grouse Mountain's Eye of the Wind (www.grousemountain.com), a 65-metre (215 foot) wind turbine which has the capacity to generate electricity and offers a lift-accessed viewing pod with spectacular views over the mountains and cityscape.

HONOURING VANCOUVER: AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Destination of the Year - Luxury Travel Guide Awards 2016 (August 2016)

Vancouver has been named Destination of the Year in the 2016 edition of the Luxury Travel Guide Awards. These awards represent the pinnacle of travel and tourism achievement, championing the best in their respective fields.

The Economist (August 2016) Once again Vancouver ranks near the top (3rd) in the world livability report, put out by the Economic Intelligence Unit, bested only by Vienna and Melbourne.

Baxter Travel Media (July 2016)

Vancouver was recognized by the Canadian travel agent community as the top destination in Canada, winning the 2016 Agents' Choice Award: *Favourite City in Canada*.

Gogobot: One of the world's top food destinations (July 2016)

Vancouver made the list of the top 10 Rising Star foodie destinations in Gogobot's 2016 Foodie Tribe Awards, bringing local produce and seafood with Far East influences to the table.

Trip Advisor (March 2016)

Vancouver's was named Top Destination in Canada by travel website TripAdvisor.com, celebrated for its "forests, grand parks and impressive suspension bridge."

Mercer Human Resource Consulting (February 2016)

In its annual Quality of Living survey, Mercer ranked Vancouver as the **top city in North America** and the **fifth-best in the world**. Mercer compared 39 factors, from crime to culture, and examined 440 cities worldwide.

Travel Weekly (December 2015)

For the thirteenth year in a row, *Travel Weekly* magazine acknowledged Vancouver as the **top Canadian destination** in its annual Readers' Choice Awards.

VANCOUVER: WHO'S COMING?

Metro Vancouver received more than 9.3 million overnight visitors in 2015, including 5.6 million from within Canada, 2.1 million from the U.S., 940,000 from the Asia-Pacific region and 424,000 from Europe. Additional markets accounted for 173,000 visitors. Visitors spent more than half their Vancouver vacation budget on accommodation and dining, contributing a total spend of almost \$4 billion to the local economy.

Vancouver is recognized as one of North America's top meetings destinations thanks to an easily navigable infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities. The city has become a mecca for planners, delegates and visitors seeking a breath of fresh air alongside innovative venues, inspiring surroundings and scores of expertise – major events that have convened here range from intimate meetings to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games to the TED Conference.

The city's iconic Vancouver Convention Centre (www.vancouverconventioncentre.com) is the world's first LEED Platinum-certified convention centre, featuring two buildings (East and West). The centre covers 1.2 million square feet with the West building built 60 percent over water and 40 percent on land. In addition to world-leading meetings facilities, the centre features a six-acre living roof, outdoor terrace and plaza areas offering spectacular harbour and mountain views, and one of Canada's largest capacity kitchens.

CRUISES

More than 800,000 cruise passengers come through the Port of Vancouver each year (www.portmetrovancouver.com). Each ship that ports in Vancouver generates approximately \$2 million in economic activity.

Vancouver's Canada Place and Ballantyne Pier are major terminals for cruise ship journeys to and from Alaska during the May to September season. The cruises, which run up to two weeks, follow one of two main routes – although

each shares the same path along a tranquil, fjorded coastline of islands known as the Inside Passage. As a world-renowned destination in its own right, Vancouver is a popular feature of many Alaska cruises, offering passengers a “two-for-one” vacation that combines a great city experience with a spectacular wilderness odyssey. In addition, Vancouver is the only home port for one-way Inside Passage cruises.

The spectacular, island-studded Inside Passage route has long been the traditional way to cruise Alaska – ships complete a round-trip voyage from Vancouver through glacier country as far north as Skagway or Juneau. Only ships sailing from Vancouver follow this signature route, arguably the world’s most iconic wilderness cruise and one of the best ways to view B.C.’s dramatic glacier-carved scenery. In contrast, ships on the longer Gulf of Alaska route cover more territory – they travel beyond the Inside Passage as far as Anchorage.

Canada Place – the city landmark with the boat sail design – is located in Vancouver’s downtown core at the north foot of Burrard Street; Ballantyne Pier is about one kilometre (half-mile) east. The port authority consistently works toward increasing the use of shore power among cruise ships – shore power reduces marine diesel air emissions by allowing ships to shut down their engines and connect to BC Hydro’s electrical grid while at dock. Since inception in 2009, shore power installations at Canada Place have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 14,000 tonnes.

Extra!

Canada Place hosts one of the country’s largest Canada Day celebrations every July 1, featuring food stands, live music, cultural performances and a giant fireworks display. There’s also a popular ceremony where new citizens are publicly welcomed to Canada.

GETTING HERE

Vancouver is the hub for a wide array of national and international transportation options, ranging from major airline routes to intercity buses and regional ferry and train services. And you can drive yourself – the city is located on main freeway routes from the U.S. and across Canada.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (YVR)

Celebrating its 85th birthday in 2016, Vancouver International Airport (www.yvr.com) is Canada’s second busiest airport. Vancouver Airport Authority is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that manages YVR. YVR served 20.3 million passengers in 2015, and 55 airlines serve YVR, connecting people and businesses to more than 120 non-stop destinations worldwide. YVR was voted Best Airport in North America for the seventh consecutive year in the 2016 Skytrax World Airport Awards. Vancouver Airport Authority is a dedicated community partner and in 2015 donated more than \$900,000 to local organizations.

Located on Sea Island, just south of the city, the main airport is divided into International and Domestic terminals. In addition, the nearby South Terminal – linked via courtesy shuttle – is home to smaller regional airplane and helicopter services. As well as full Canada Customs and Immigration facilities, America-bound travellers can clear US Customs and Immigration at Vancouver International Airport.

Story idea:

For an unprecedented seventh year, YVR has been voted North America’s number one airport in the Skytrax World Airport Awards. Consider a “layover story” covering the airport’s art trail for visitors – YVR is home to a striking Aboriginal art collection. In 2016, four new works carved by acclaimed First Nations artist Reg Davidson went on display, recounting Haida myths of creation and mischief, including a 24-foot carved cedar pole entitled “Raven Stealing the Beaver Lake”. Bill Reid’s “Spirit of Haida Gwaii: Jade Canoe” is also on display at YVR (it’s the statue’s 10th anniversary in 2016). You can download a free self-guided art and architecture tour from the YVR website. For more information on the airport’s art program, see www.yvraf.com.

NEXUS Air: YVR was the first airport in North America to offer NEXUS Air, which makes flying to and from the United States or other international destinations more efficient for low-risk, pre-approved travellers. NEXUS Air complements the existing CANPASS Air program, and both assist program members in bypassing border lineups using cutting-edge biometric iris recognition technology.

Connecting to YVR: It’s a 30-minute taxi ride (up to \$35) from the airport to downtown Vancouver. The cabs – which operate around the clock and are available just outside the two arrivals areas – are regulated by the city. Limojet Gold (www.limojetgold.com) offers sedan and limousine services on a 24-hour basis, while Aeroshuttle (www.aeroshuttleyvr.ca) provides a minibus service to select downtown hotels. Every major car hire agency also operates at the airport, including Avis, Alamo, Budget, Hertz, National and Thrifty.

Visitors can beat the traffic by using the Canada Line, SkyTrain’s rapid rail service linking YVR to Richmond and Vancouver. The trip to downtown’s Waterfront Station is approximately 25 minutes. See www.translink.ca for details.

TRAIN

VIA Rail (www.viarail.ca): Canada’s national passenger rail service operates a western transcontinental train – The Canadian – between Vancouver and Toronto. Services depart Vancouver’s Pacific Central Station on Fridays, Sundays and Tuesdays, during summer and Tuesday and Friday in the winter. Train departs Toronto on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in summer and Tuesday and Saturday in winter. The entire journey takes three days and four nights and the train offers three service classes: Economy, Sleeper Touring, and Prestige.

Rocky Mountaineer (www.rockymountaineer.com): Rocky Mountaineer offers spectacular train routes throughout Western Canada. The “First Passage to the West” train goes from Vancouver to Banff or Lake Louise, stopping in Kamloops to overnight; “Journey through the Clouds” goes from Vancouver to Jasper, stopping in Kamloops; “Rainforest to Gold Rush” travels between Vancouver and Jasper, with overnight stops in Whistler and Quesnel, and the Coastal Passage follows the coastline from Seattle through Vancouver to the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

Amtrak (www.amtrakcascades.com): The U.S. passenger train service is part of Amtrak’s Pacific Northwest network, servicing Oregon and Washington States. Its *Cascades* service travels twice daily between Eugene, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver.

West Coast Express (<http://www.translink.ca/en/Schedules-and-Maps/West-Coast-Express.aspx>): These popular regional commuter trains arrive at downtown’s Waterfront Station on weekday mornings and depart in the early evening. Stations served include Mission City, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody.

BUS

Greyhound (www.greyhound.ca): Regular inter-city Greyhound bus services arrive at Vancouver’s Pacific Central Station from locations including Seattle, Whistler, Kelowna and Calgary.

Snowbus (<https://snowbus.com>): This winter-only service links Vancouver and Whistler, with stops in Richmond, Kerrisdale, Kitsilano downtown Vancouver and West Vancouver.

Pacific Coach Lines (www.pacificcoach.com): Frequent PCL bus services arrive at Pacific Central Station from downtown Victoria, via the BC Ferries Swartz Bay-Tsawwassen route. The company also runs a popular service between downtown Vancouver and Whistler.

Story idea:

A tale of two cities: consider a story focused on Vancouver plus another community that’s easily reachable by train, ferry, bus or floatplane. This could include an Amtrak trip from Vancouver to Portland; a BC Ferries sailing from Vancouver to Victoria; a PCL bus trek from Vancouver to Whistler; or a scenic floatplane flight from Vancouver to Salt Spring Island.

CAR

You can drive to Vancouver from eastern Canada and the province’s eastern communities via Highway 1 (the Trans-Canada Highway), which snakes into the city along Hastings Street.

From the U.S., Highway 99 runs due north from the border at Blaine. After entering Vancouver, it travels up to Whistler and further into B.C. where it eventually meets Highway 97, the province's main north-south route. A three-hour drive between Seattle and Vancouver, the border crossing often has line-ups on holidays and weekends.

Extra!

The section of Highway 99 between Vancouver and Whistler is known as the "Sea to Sky Highway" for its spectacular mountain and waterfront views. The route also includes several attractions, such as the Sea to Sky Gondola, Shannon Falls, the Britannia Mine Museum and the West Coast Railway Heritage Park.

FERRY

BC Ferries (www.bcferries.com) is the largest domestic ferry service in the world. It offers dozens of daily sailings from Horseshoe Bay (north of Vancouver) and Tsawwassen (south of Vancouver). It takes 90 minutes to travel between Tsawwassen and Vancouver Island's Swartz Bay – the main route for Victoria-bound passengers; 40 minutes to travel between Horseshoe Bay and Langdale on the Sunshine Coast; and 90 minutes to travel between Horseshoe Bay and Vancouver Island's Nanaimo. There are also several Tsawwassen services to and from the southern Gulf Islands.

Launched in 1960 with just two ships and 225 employees, the BC Ferries system now has 34 vessels and 47 ports of call over 24 routes. It carries more than 20 million passengers and eight million vehicles annually. Reservations are available and recommended, especially on mainland to Vancouver Island routes. All ferries have wi-fi and there is a downtown storefront booking centre at the north foot of Burrard Street.

FLOATPLANE

With the largest floatplane network in the world, B.C.'s spectacular surroundings are often best experienced from the air. Interested in being whisked away for a breathtaking glacier-packed mountain view, followed by a romantic stroll and a gourmet picnic for two? Several Vancouver tour companies offer such romantic retreats. Regular daily services also connect downtown Vancouver and Victoria's Inner Harbour in around 30 minutes and there are also links to Nanaimo, Whistler and additional communities on Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands. Popular operators include Harbour Air (www.harbour-air.com), West Coast Air (www.westcoastair.com) and SeaAir Seaplanes (www.seairseaplanes.com).

Alternatively, Helijet International (www.helijet.com) offers regular helicopter services between Vancouver Nanaimo and Victoria.

GETTING AROUND

Vancouver's road network is relatively easy to navigate, cars are not required in the downtown core, where most people move around using bikes, transit, taxis or

on foot. For travel outside the downtown area, options include public transit, car rentals, tour buses, taxis or even limousines if you want to go in style.

WALKABILITY

Unlike many North American cities, Vancouver is highly walkable, with wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and an easily navigated grid street system. The compact downtown core – around one mile across – is a short stroll from neighbourhoods like Gastown, Yaletown and Chinatown as well as the beaches of the West End. Walking to Stanley Park along the seawall from Canada Place is one of the city's signature promenades. And you're never far from a bus, SkyTrain or mini-ferry service if it's time to rest your legs.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Transit throughout the Lower Mainland is run and regulated by TransLink (www.translink.ca), which is responsible for local bus, SkyTrain and SeaBus services.

New for 2016, Compass is a reloadable fare card that works everywhere on transit in Metro Vancouver. When you get a Compass Card, you'll pay a \$6 refundable deposit for your card. You can get your \$6 deposit back by returning your card to the Compass Customer Service Centre at Stadium–Chinatown Station or the West Coast Express Office at Waterfront Station.

With a single fare, you can transfer as many times as you need for up to 90 minutes. You can hop on and off for errands and as long as you make your final transfer within 90 minutes, and tap out before the expiry of your in-system time (120 minutes), you won't need to pay for a second fare.

You can buy a Compass Ticket from a Compass Vending Machine (CVM). CVMs are located at SkyTrain, SeaBus and West Coast Express stations, 18 London Drugs locations (<http://www.translink.ca/en/Fares-and-Passes/Where-to-buy-FareDealer.aspx>) and BC Ferries Tsawwassen and Horseshoe Bay terminals.

Single 1-zone fares are \$2.75 and a day pass is \$9.75. DayPasses purchased at Sea Island stations require payment of the \$5 Canada Line YVR AddFare and cost \$14.75. You can pay cash on a bus. You can transfer to other buses with your bus transfer for 90 minutes, but you'll need a Compass Card or Compass Ticket to transfer to SkyTrain, SeaBus or West Coast Express.

The transit system is divided into three zones, covering Vancouver and many of its suburbs. Concessions are available for seniors and school students. After 6.30 p.m. weekdays and throughout weekends and public holidays, the maximum fare is \$2.75 no matter how many zones you're travelling. Routes, schedules, a trip planner and service information are available on the TransLink website (www.translink.ca).

Bus: Vancouver has North America's second largest bus transit fleet, dominated by wheelchair-accessible electric trolley buses. Regular services on the busiest

routes run every 12 minutes from 5 a.m. to past midnight. There are also “Night-bus” services on some downtown suburban routes.

SeaBus: TransLink’s foot passenger ferries link downtown Vancouver’s Waterfront Station with North Vancouver’s Lonsdale Quay. The picturesque journey across Burrard Inlet takes around 12 minutes and runs throughout the day. At either end, the terminals are linked to the bus system and its schedules. On the Vancouver side, the terminal is also adjacent to the SkyTrain and West Coast Express train stations.

SkyTrain: Vancouver’s automated light rapid transit system, SkyTrain, offers a fast, efficient service between downtown Vancouver and the suburbs. Its original Expo Line operates from Waterfront Station to King George Station, via 20 stops in Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster and Surrey. Journey time is around 30 minutes. The Millennium Line shares the same stations from Waterfront to Columbia, before branching to Sapperton, Braid, Lougheed Town Centre and beyond to Commercial Drive. The Canada Line operates between downtown Vancouver and the Vancouver International Airport. This line has 16 stations to the including Richmond, Broadway-City Hall, Yaletown and Vancouver City Centre. Travel time between the airport and downtown is about 20 minutes.

Extra!

The SkyTrain system is the oldest as well as one of the longest automated passenger rail lines in the world. Appropriately, it was built for Expo '86, a world exposition themed on transportation.

Story idea:

Consider a day out with a \$9.75 transit pass in Vancouver, including trips on buses, SkyTrain and SeaBus services. You could hit museums and architectural gems along the way, visit neighbourhoods like Yaletown and Commercial Drive and hop across to Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver.

Plus:

Tweet your trip live on Twitter and ask for suggestions on where to go next.

BOAT

Aquabus (www.theaquabus.com): With a fleet of bathtub-sized vessels – some big enough to carry bikes – Aquabus services run between the foot of Hornby Street and Granville Island. They service additional spots around False Creek, including Science World and Yaletown, and also offer sightseeing mini-cruises. Adult fares are from \$3.50 with an all-day pass at \$15.

False Creek Ferries (www.granvilleislandferries.bc.ca): Operating a similar service and visiting some of the same spots including Granville Island, False Creek Ferries runs 10 vessels, including two 20-passenger “super-mini-ferries.” Its tours include Kitsilano and Science World and adult fares are from \$3.25 and an all-day pass \$15.

TAXI

Vancouver has several well-regulated taxi companies whose drivers must all pass minimum standards in a number of key service areas. The main operators include:

- Black Top & Checker Cabs (www.btccabs.ca; 604-731-1111)
- MacLures Cabs (www.maclurescabs.ca; 604-831-1111)
- Vancouver Taxi (www.avancouvertaxi.com; 604-871-1111)
- Yellow Cab Company (www.yellowcabonline.com; 604-681-1111)

Extra!

If hailing on the street isn't working, the best places to pick up a cab in downtown Vancouver are the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, the Four Seasons or the Sutton Place Hotel. Or download one of many smartphone taxi apps.

WALKING AND CYCLING: SELF-GUIDED TOURS

Downtown Vancouver is eminently walkable – many of its main attractions and shopping areas are close together and its grid-like street system makes navigation easy. With an expanding network of more than 300 kilometres (186 miles) of dedicated bike lanes, the city is also great for cycling fans. Cyclists can also take their bikes for free on SkyTrains, SeaBuses and rack-fitted transit buses. See TransLink's website (www.translink.ca) for information on regional bike routes.

For those with a little time on their hands, try these recommended routes – two for walkers and one for walkers or cyclists.

Downtown Architecture Amble

Start at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. This elegant *grand dame* of the city's sleepover scene is actually the third incarnation of the Hotel Vancouver, one of a string of chateau-style hotels built across Canada by Canadian Pacific Railway. From here, stroll west along Georgia Street, passing Christ Church Cathedral on Burrard (go inside to check out its spectacular cedar ceiling and stained-glass window collection). When you reach the Thurlow Street intersection, you'll be in front of the Shangri-La building, Vancouver's tallest. Housing a hotel on the bottom and pricey condos on top, its 61 floors reach 201 metres (659 feet). Stop to check out the *al fresco* art installation alongside – it's the off-site exhibit space of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Double back along Georgia to Burrard Street. Turn left onto Burrard and walk towards the sea and the mountains. At the intersection with Hasting Street, you'll find Vancouver's favourite art deco structure, the Marine Building, which is elaborately adorned with aquatic motifs on the outside and has a lovely interior from a bygone age of elaborate ornamentation. Go inside for a look around the lobby, then continue north on Burrard. As the waterfront emerges ahead, you'll come to the dramatic Convention Centre expansion building, a spectacular grass-roofed structure hugging the shoreline. Walk around the exterior to enjoy its amazing ocean and mountain vistas – and save time to check out the

Cauldron, a visually impressive reminder of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Granville Island Studio Stroll

One of the best ways to spend a lazy sunny day in Vancouver is to hit Granville Island. But while the Public Market is undoubtedly a highlight, it's well worth straying from the beaten path and ducking around the back lanes that crisscross the area.

Start at the Anderson Street entrance, directly under the looming span of Granville Bridge. Walk north and take a right onto Cartwright Street. On your right is the Kids Market; on your left is Granville Island Brewing, Canada's first microbrewery. Continue east along Cartwright and you'll soon come to the Craffhouse Gallery and the Gallery of BC Ceramics, each showcasing the wealth of local arts and crafts available on the island. The pathway alongside the ceramics gallery will bring you to Railspur Alley; turn right onto this back lane and you'll find an artisan sake maker, a craft distillery, a coffee shop and several tempting craft studios.

Continue east, rejoin Cartwright Street and head to the eastern tip of the Island, home to the boutique Granville Island Hotel which also has a restaurant with a large patio, and a brewery. There's also traces of the island's industrial past here, such as a preserved crane. Head back west along Johnston Street, passing the Emily Carr University (there's a free-entry art gallery inside if you fancy a break from walking). Continue west on Johnston and within minutes you'll be at the Public Market, the ideal spot to end your short walk and grab something to eat.

Stanley Park Nature Tour

This is Vancouver's must-do walking, hiking and rollerblading trail, and one of the most memorable ways to spend your time in the city. The 8.8-kilometre (5.5-mile) seawall route circles the park and is renowned for its ocean, mountain and forest views. It takes around three or four hours on foot and an hour or two by bike, depending on how often you stop to drink in the sights.

Start at the West Georgia Street entrance of the park, following the seawall as it curves around Coal Harbour past the reproduction Tudor Vancouver Rowing Club building. As you continue along the seawall, passing the park's Information Centre, you'll come to a mini-forest of colourful totem poles – one of the city's most popular outdoor attractions. After snapping a few shots, continue along the waterfront, passing the Nine O'Clock Gun (which still sounds every evening); the 100-year-old Brockton Point Lighthouse; and the *Girl in a Wetsuit* statue, stretching out on a rock just off shore. After passing under the vast span of the Lions Gate Bridge, you'll soon round rocky Prospect Point.

From here, the shoreline is wilder and more windswept and you can expect plenty of swooping birdlife to keep you company. Take a pit stop at Third Beach, sit on a log and watch the ocean panorama, before continuing on to Second Beach and its popular swimming pool and concession stands. Soon, you'll be

emerging on the fringes of English Bay, in the heart of the West End neighbourhood. The seawall will suddenly be much busier here and – if it's sunny – the beach ahead of you will be packed with bathers.

STAY VANCOUVER

There are more than 25,000 hotel rooms in over 210 hotel properties in Metro Vancouver. More than half of these rooms are downtown. While the average rate is just over \$200, rooms can go for as little as \$70 or for more than \$1,000 a night. The best hotel deals are offered October through April.

Vancouver hotels frequently offer special room rates and tempting packages tailored to all interests, with themes including Romance; Spa & Shopping; Arts, Entertainment & Events; Family, Attractions & Sightseeing; and Dining, Culinary & Breakfast. Packages can be booked online via <http://www.tourismvancouver.com/places-to-stay/>

Story idea:

Follow the stars by checking into a Vancouver hotel that's favoured by visiting celebs. Among the swank sleepovers for Hollywood glitterati are Rosewood Hotel Georgia (www.rosewoodhotels.com); Loden Vancouver (www.theloden.com); Opus Hotel (www.opushotel.com); Shangri-La Vancouver (www.shangri-la.com/vancouver); Pan Pacific Vancouver (www.panpacific.com); Sutton Place Hotel (www.vancouver.suttonplace.com) and Wedgewood Hotel (www.wedgewoodhotel.com).

ACCESSIBLE VANCOUVER

Vancouver has a reputation for being one of the most accessible cities in the world. For disabled visitors, most attractions and many recreational sites are fully accessible. For more information, see the city of Vancouver's dedicated web resource: www.vancouver.ca/accessibility.

TRANSPORT TO THE CITY FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Vancouver International Airport (www.yvr.com): YVR exceeds national standards for people with hearing, visual or mobility impairments. Features include ticket and service counters with amplified handsets; low-mounted flight information monitors; visual paging monitors and public address systems displayed in written form; tactile guidance maps of the terminal building; and accessible washrooms.

Airport vehicle rental agencies can provide cars with hand-controls. Accessible cabs are also available at the airport. All Canada Line stations are wheelchair-accessible, making public transportation easy – every Canada Line train can accommodate four wheelchairs.

BC Ferries (www.bcferrries.com): Wheelchair-users planning to use the ferry can request easy-access parking at terminal buildings. All boat washrooms and

deck areas are accessible on major ferry routes – decks are accessible by elevator on larger ships. Passengers are requested to call ahead before they travel to access a range of special services.

Pacific Coach Lines (www.pacificcoach.com): PCL offers accessible bus services between Vancouver and Victoria. Travellers must call 48 hours ahead to check availability.

TRANSPORT AROUND THE CITY FOR MOBILITY IMPAIRED VISITORS

Transit: All Vancouver bus, SeaBus, SkyTrain and West Coast Express train services are accessible. The TransLink website (www.translink.ca) has a wealth of additional information on accessible transit services across the region.

Taxis: Accessible cabs are widely available across Vancouver from the city's major taxi operators. Call ahead to ensure availability.

ACCOMMODATION FOR MOBILITY IMPAIRED VISITORS

Hotels and other accommodation operators are assigned ratings for wheelchair, visual and hearing accessibility as part of the Accessible Tourism program. This program is a partnership between Tourism Vancouver, 2010 Legacies Now, the Province of BC and other tourism and disability organizations throughout the region. See Tourism Vancouver's website (www.tourismvancouver.com) for more information and resources.

LINKS

- Disability Alliance BC (www.disabilityalliancebc.org)
- BC Lions Society for Children with Disabilities (www.lionsbc.ca)
- BC Mobility Opportunities Society (www.bcmos.org)
- Spinal Cord Injury BC (<http://sci-bc.ca>)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (www.cnib.ca)
- Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (www.widhh.com)

DIVERSE VANCOUVER

Vancouver has a population of 603,000 – rising to 2.3 million when you include the wider Metro Vancouver region (third largest in Canada). A model of diversity, almost 50 per cent of the population considers English its mother tongue, while the most recent census (2011) revealed that 25 percent consider Chinese their first language – Tagalog, Punjabi and Vietnamese were the next most-popular first languages among locals. The census also revealed that the city's population was almost equally divided between immigrants and non-immigrants. Age-wise, the age groups 20 to 39, and 40 to 64, are tied at 34.5 per cent each of the total population.

Locals work in a wide variety of jobs and while heavy industries have seen a decline in recent years, there has been a sharp rise in new jobs in personal and business services. This includes jobs in areas like computing, law, accounting, management consulting, advertising, e-commerce, architecture and engineering.

The number of these jobs has more than doubled in the past 20 years. The city's major employers include Telus Corporation, Jim Pattison Group, Air Canada and the University of British Columbia.

CHINESE

North America's third-largest Chinatown (after San Francisco and New York) occupies a handful of blocks around Main, Keefer and Hastings streets. Strathcona, Vancouver's oldest residential neighbourhood, butts up against Chinatown and also has a rich history of immigrant settlement, especially in its historic Japantown area. More than 60 percent of Chinatown's residents list Cantonese or Mandarin as their mother tongue, which explains why the street signs here are bilingual.

Many of the region's younger Chinese immigrants shop at the modern Asian malls in Richmond, but the rest of the city comes to the old Chinatown area to check out the displays of barbecued duck, spicy sausages and stores brimming with silk, jade and trinkets. For visitors, soaking up the scents and sounds here, lunching at a traditional dim-sum house, then seeking tranquillity at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (www.vancouverchinesegarden.com) is an ideal Chinatown day out. In addition, you could time your visit for Chinese New Year, with its popular parade, or the annual Chinatown Festival – see www.vancouver-chinatown.com for information on both events. A true fusion city, Asian culture permeates Vancouver, with strong influences in fashion, art, performance and – especially – food: the city's dining scene is flavoured with taste-tripping Asian influences at all levels, from street food to fine dining.

Story idea:

In Chinatown, you'll find some of Vancouver's oldest architecture, untouched by development, telling the stories of the Chinese immigrant community that thrived here in the early 1900s. The Sam Kee Building (8 West Pender Street) is said to be the world's narrowest building at only six feet deep. The Millennium Gate, and Shanghai and Canton Alleys, are also noteworthy.

Plus:

The sights and sounds of Chinatown are a major lure. Consider making an audio slideshow combining recorded background sounds with colourful photos. You might focus on the market, or just cover a regular day out in the neighbourhood. For extra authenticity, add a couple of interviews with locals.

Extra!

Check out the tiny red-painted shack known as the Jimi Hendrix Shrine at Main and Union streets. It celebrates the spot where Hendrix regularly visited his grandmother, eating in the restaurant she worked at and playing his guitar in bars around the area.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN & EAST ASIAN

Asian immigration has steadily swelled in recent decades as an increasing number of people from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam have begun to call Vancouver home. Many have moved to the suburb of Richmond where thriving ethnic businesses have emerged.

Easily accessible via the Canada Line, Richmond has several Asian shopping and dining complexes including Aberdeen Centre (www.aberdeencentre.com), Parker Place (www.parkerplace.com) and Richmond Centre (www.richmondcentre.com). Mixing Southeast Asian and East Asian influences, visitors here can find some of the best dining in the region alongside karaoke bars and traditional temples. Among the most popular Richmond attractions is Kuan Yin Temple (www.buddhisttemple.ca), one of Canada's finest traditional Chinese Imperial Place-style buildings.

There are several Asian-themed festivals in Vancouver, including the popular Powell Street Festival (www.powellstreetfestival.com) and the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (www.vaff.org).

Story idea:

Visit the Powell Street Festival in Oppenheimer Park, held every year in late summer around the city's old Japantown district. A highly popular cultural celebration, it's a great spot to interact with Vancouver's historic and contemporary Japanese-Canadian community. Consider shooting some video footage of the dynamic cultural performances and interviewing locals on the event. Make sure you include a focus on the food: it's one of the most popular aspects of the festival.

Story idea:

Spend a day in Richmond's Golden Triangle area, renowned for its dozens of authentic ethnic dining experiences, from Korean barbecue to Japanese cafés and clamorous Chinese dim-sum houses. And if you're still hungry, nip back to downtown Vancouver for dinner in the city's traditional Chinatown area.

Plus:

Interview some chefs and add recipes to your story.

EAST INDIAN

While Metro Vancouver is home to thousands of Indo-Canadians, Vancouver's Punjabi Market area – located on Main Street between East 48th and 51st Avenues – is the city's primary East Indian focal point. Fabric and jewellery stores line the area, which is also home to some authentic and well-regarded Indian restaurants. Inexpensive silks, groceries and 22-carat gold jewellery are a big draw for visitors, and there are several colourful festivals in the area. These include November's Festival of Lights, April's Vaisakhi Day Parade celebrating Indian New Year and the new Indian Summer Festival, held every July. A few blocks away, the Sikh Temple, at the south foot of Ross Street, is also worth a visit. It was designed by prominent Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson.

GREEK

East Vancouver has been the centre of the city's colourful Greek community for decades. The area comes alive for Vancouverites and visitors alike in late June when the popular Greek Summer Festival (www.vancouvergreeksummerfest.com) attracts thousands for a multi-day, family-friendly fiesta of music, performance and great food. All events at the festival are free. In addition, a highly popular food-focused Greek Day (www.greekday.com) is staged every June on Broadway in the Kitsilano neighbourhood.

ITALIAN

Just a mile east of the downtown core is Commercial Drive, the bustling East Vancouver thoroughfare where an influx of Italian immigrants created a "Little Italy" neighbourhood in the 1950s. While the Drive has since become even more cosmopolitan, its traditional Italian coffee shops remain and are the backbone of the community. Along with your perfect espresso, you can now dip into natural food eateries, reggae record stores and vintage clothing shops in what is the city's most bohemian district.

Story idea:

Consider a coffee crawl on Commercial Drive, ranging from hangouts such as Café Calabria and Caffé Roma to hipster haunt the Prado Café. End the day at a poetry slam event with the area's funky locals at Café Deux Soleils. Include interviews with some of the generations of Italian baristas that still work the Drive.

FIRST NATIONS

Vancouver's Aboriginal population is extremely diverse and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from all across Canada. Metro Vancouver has the third largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada with 52,375 people. There are three local First Nations in Vancouver: Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh. These three are part of a larger cultural group called the Coast Salish. The City of Vancouver is on the traditional territories of these three First Nations who have a special spiritual, cultural, and economic connection to this land that goes back thousands of years. From the ornate artworks on display at the airport to the totem poles of Stanley Park and the unique businesses and tour operators founded by First Nations people around the Lower Mainland, the area's first residents are still much in evidence.

Many travellers are fascinated by this ancient heritage and often make a point of visiting those attractions that incorporate First Nations elements. These include Capilano Suspension Bridge Park (www.capbridge.com), UBC's Museum of Anthropology (www.moa.ubc.ca), Museum of Vancouver (www.museumofvancouver.ca), Vancouver Art Gallery (www.vanartgallery.bc.ca) and the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art (www.billreidgallery.ca).

Story idea:

Consider a story on Takaya Tours (www.takayatours.com), a Coast Salish tour

company that takes visitors out on the tranquil waters of Deep Cove in an authentic cedar canoe. The First Nations guides sing songs, tell stories and relate the history of their people in the region. Add to your experience by staying at Skwachays Lodge (www.skwachays.com), part Aboriginal art gallery, part boutique hotel and part social enterprise, with 18 rooms, individually decorated by First Nations artists working alongside interior designers; having dinner at the Salmon and Bannock bistro (www.salmonandbannock.net); and checking out some of the attractions listed above.

LGBTQ

By the time Canada legalized same-sex marriage in 2005, Vancouver was already the country's number one destination for LGBTQ travellers. Home for many years to a large and vibrant gay community in the West End's Davie Street Village area, the city's main lure has always been the warm welcome it offers and the fact that its LGBTQ community is part of the mainstream rather than an outside subsection of it – as shown by the annual summertime Pride Parade. The biggest Mardi Gras-style event in Vancouver, it attracts as many as 500,000 locals every August as it winds its way through the heart of the West End. For more information on the scene, pick up a free copy of *Xtra!* newspaper (www.xtra.ca) or visit www.gayvan.com and www.gayvancouver.net.

Vancouver hotels are inclusive, but many have also received an extra “gay friendly” designation from TAG (Travel Alternatives Group). Check their listings at www.tagapproved.com.

History

Vancouver was a pioneer for gay rights in the 1960s, fostering a lively gay and lesbian community that echoed those emerging in Portland and San Francisco around the same time. In 1971, the Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE) was founded in the city, becoming the first Canadian organization to work for equal gay and lesbian rights under Canadian law. It also launched its own newspaper called *Gay Tide* in 1977.

Vancouver's first Pride Week was started by this organization in 1973, with different sources stating that the city's first Pride Parade was launched either in 1978 or 1981. The parade started small – it covered only one side of the street while the route remained open to regular traffic. While GATE was dissolved in 1980, its work continued and the community gradually attained increased rights and mainstream acceptance. In 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau marched with his family in the Pride Parade, the first Canadian PM to do so. British Columbia legalized same-sex marriage in 2003 – and, in 2005, Canada followed suit. Vancouver is now one of the most popular cities in the world for destination gay weddings. In July 2016, the City of Vancouver adopted a new action plan designed to make public facilities safe and inclusive for members of the trans, gender variant and two-spirit communities.

Vancouver's “Gaybourhoods”

Western Canada's largest gay population is centered on the West End's Davie Street area, complete with its pink-painted bus shelters, rainbow-flag window decals and the new Jim Deva plaza/lounge space. Scattered with gay-friendly cafés, bars and stores, the area is renowned for its nightlife, combining loud and proud pub hangouts with hopping clubs. Along with the West End, East Vancouver's bohemian Commercial Drive is also a favourite neighbourhood for LGBTQ residents and has historically been the centre of the city's lesbian community.

Pride Week

More than 30 years old, Vancouver biggest street parade draws up to half-a-million locals to the streets of the West End every summer. They come for the thumping party vibe, smile-triggering carnival atmosphere and to celebrate the fact that the city's LGBTQ community is fully accepted. Organized by the volunteer-run Vancouver Pride Society (VPS) – whose mission is to "bring together members of the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community, their friends, allies and supporters in celebration of the unique spirit and culture of the community" – the event is only one facet of the Pride Festival, a multi-day extravaganza of parties, galas, club nights and celebrations throughout the city. For more information on the event, see www.vancouverpride.ca.

Story idea:

Hit the city during Pride Week for a nightlife story on the many galas, parties and nightclub shenanigans. Include interviews with performers in town for the event, from risqué dancers to glamorous drag queens.

WHERE TO GO

VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOOD STORIES

Like a city of villages, Vancouver neighbourhoods each have their own distinct dining, drinking and shopping scenes, providing plenty of unique angles for in-the-know “local flavour” stories. Here’s an introduction to the most intriguing of our 23 neighbourhoods. Consider a story that rounds up several neighbourhoods under a single theme – “historic ‘hoods”, “drinking districts” or “exploring on foot”, for example – or hit one neighbourhood and dig beneath its surface to provide an in-depth feel for visitors.

DOWNTOWN

Centered on Robson Street, the city’s downtown core is teeming with boutique-loving shoppers intent on scooping up the latest designer fashions. The street is also a de facto promenade: on summer evenings it’s full of strolling visitors ambling among the late-opening stores and checking out colourful street performers by the Vancouver Art Gallery. Reflecting Vancouver’s multi-culturalism, Robson is also home to dozens of authentic ethnic restaurants, especially where it bisects Denman Street, and you’ll find packed late-night noodle shops, Korean fried chicken joints, Japanese Izakaya, specialist dessert shops and tiny upstairs karaoke bars.

Story idea:

Cover Robson Street’s vibrant young Asian culture – especially from a foodie perspective.

WEST END

Stretching from Coal Harbour to English Bay, with Stanley Park on one side and Burrard Street on the other, the West End’s tree-lined boulevards, diverse restaurants and independent shops serve a population of young people and seniors in a largely adult-focussed area of the city. This is also where Western Canada’s largest LGBTQ population lives.

The West End’s main thoroughfares are Denman Street, dominated by mid-priced restaurants; Davie Street, with its busy shops and gay-friendly nightlife venues; and Robson Street, with its funky Asian fast food spots, ramen-ya, and boutique chain stores. For a blast from the area’s past, check out Barclay Heritage Square, nine historic homes, including the popular Roedde House museum (www.roeddehouse.org).

Story idea:

Explore the West End by Moby bike or on rollerblades – there are several rental outlets in the area. Dive into the area’s bustling side streets, then trundle onto the Stanley Park seawall.

GASTOWN

A National Historic Site of Canada and the city's oldest neighbourhood, Gastown is where Vancouver began. It's named after John "Gassy Jack" Deighton, who showed up with a barrel of whisky in 1867 – telling the area's sawmill workers they could drink as much as they wanted if they helped him build a saloon. Not surprisingly, the job was quickly completed and the new bar triggered a rash of development in the area. Now lined with brick-paved streets, Gastown's heritage buildings have recently been colonized with cool designer stores and some of the city's best cocktail bars. But it's the district's dining scene that makes it one of Canada's leading culinary hotspots. Cutting-edge restaurants open in Gastown all the time, pioneering new movements in the city's already exciting restaurant scene – stroll the streets here for house-made charcuterie, specialist dessert bars, French-Asian fusion with a Pacific Northwest twist and craft beer pubs.

Story idea:

Delve into Vancouver's gruesome past on a Lost Souls of Gastown Tour with Forbidden Vancouver to discover its roots as a frontier town of hustlers, bawdy women and vagabonds. (<http://forbiddenvancouver.ca/lost-souls-of-gastown-vancouver-tour/>) Or try a progressive dinner with Vancouver Food Tour's Gastown Tasting Tour as you sip and eat your way through a curated collection of cool bars and restaurants (<http://www.vancouverfoodtour.com/tours/gastown-tasting-tour/>).

CHINATOWN

Vancouver boasts the third-largest Chinatown in North America, packed with historic reminders of the immigrants that helped build B.C. from the mid-18th-century onwards – even before Vancouver was officially a city. Spanning Main, Pender and Keefer streets, today's Chinatown is a kaleidoscope of sights, sounds and aromas: from its teeming grocery stores, chatty dim-sum joints and hip new Asian-inspired bars and restaurants to its tranquil Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (www.vancouverchinesegarden.com) and towering Millennium Gate. This is the spot for a full cultural and sensory immersion.

Story idea:

Art galleries thrive in Chinatown from non-profits such as Project Space (<http://projectspace.ca>) which is dedicated to publication as an artistic medium, and the Centre A public art gallery, (<http://centrea.org>) which has a reading room of one of the country's best collections of Asian art books, to the Wing Sang building (Chinatown's oldest), where the city's real estate mogul, Bob Rennie offers free tours of his private contemporary art collection (<http://renniecollection.org/index.php>).

RAILTOWN

Main Street divides fashionable Gastown from the warehouses and train tracks of Railtown – a neighborhood which is transforming into a thriving scene for creative professionals. The old warehouses and factories are giving way to restaurants and furniture shops, fashion studios and offices for high-tech firms. A number of Vancouver-born tech and retail companies have their offices in this area

including Herschel Supply Co, Aritzia, and Inform Design. HootSuite (born-in-Vancouver social media dashboard company) also began in Railtown.

Story idea:

Explore the Railtown dining scene, from Vancouver Magazine 'Restaurant of the Year' award-winners Ask for Luigi (www.askforluigi.com), the Settlement Building (<http://www.settlementbuilding.com>) – which houses Vancouver Urban Winery, Belgard Kitchen and Postmark Brewery –and Railtown Café (<https://railtowncafe.ca>), which hosts summertime barbecue cook outs on the street.

YALETOWN

Yaletown takes its name from the Canadian Pacific Railway workers who settled there in the 1880s, having followed the line west from the town of Yale in the BC interior. For most of the twentieth century, Yaletown was a warehouse and packing district, but after Vancouver hosted the World's Fair in 1986, the waterfront north of False Creek was home to many venues and so began the area's transformation. Now those redbrick warehouses have morphed into stylish loft apartments, and the raised loading yards are plant and flower-filled patios for restaurants and bars. Roughly bounded by Nelson, Homer, Drake and Pacific streets, the downtown enclave has a hip and inviting atmosphere – especially at night, when its bars can be packed to the rafters with the city's beautiful people intent on checking each other out. Yaletown is home to some of the city's best restaurants – a dining tour of the area is highly recommended – as well as the Opus Hotel (www.opushotel.com), the city's contemporary, celebrity-friendly boutique sleeper.

Story idea:

Explore the variety of dining options on the streets of Yaletown, including seafood at Blue Water Café (www.bluewatercafe.net), Japanese pub favourites at Hapa Izakaya Yaletown (www.hapaizakaya.com) and plant-based vegan treats at Zend Conscious Lounge (<http://zendlounge.com>). Include chef interviews and a sidebar of recipes with your story.

GRANVILLE ISLAND & SOUTH FALSE CREEK

Stretching west along the inlet from Science World, South False Creek was the site of the 2010 Olympic Village, now a burgeoning neighbourhood of its own, the 'Village boasts brew pubs, funky restaurants and speciality ice cream shops. Continue along the seawall here for a wonderful urban walk, combining waterfront views, public artworks and a mini nature enclave called Habitat Island. Conclude your 2.5-kilometre (1.5-mile) waterfront stroll at one of Vancouver's favourite half-day hangouts.

Constructed on sandbanks and originally nicknamed "Mud Island," Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com) was an industrial park in the early years of the twentieth-century. Following decades of decline, it was reinvented in the 1970s as a visitor-friendly warren of artist studios, independent shops (chain stores are

not allowed here), distinctive restaurants - plus a hugely popular Public Market. The locals embraced the transformation – often regarded as one of Canada’s best urban renewal projects – and visitors have been calling this spot one of their favourite parts of Vancouver ever since.

Story idea:

Plot a food-lovers tour of Granville Island, from the produce and deli counters of the Public Market to the island’s own Granville Island Brewing facility. If you fancy company, book a guided tour with Vancouver Foodie Tours (www.foodietours.ca)

EAST VANCOUVER: MAIN STREET TO COMMERCIAL DRIVE

One of Vancouver’s most culturally and socially diverse neighbourhoods, this large area stretches east from Gastown and Chinatown. Its key thoroughfares are Main Street and Commercial Drive, each with their own unique vibe. Nestled between and around these two long roads are old but increasingly gentrified neighbourhoods like Strathcona and Mount Pleasant.

Stretching south from Chinatown, Main Street runs right through Mount Pleasant and is often regarded as the city’s dedicated hipster enclave. Its main hubs are the intersection of Main and Broadway – studded with indie coffee shops, unique clothing stores and cool bars – and the blocks running south from the intersection of Main and 19th Avenue, where you’ll find many of the city’s best independent shops and a buzzing brewery scene.

Further east, Commercial Drive can claim to be Vancouver’s first hipster hood. Colonized by Italian immigrant families in the 1950s, it later became the city’s bohemian heart, a spot where Bukowski read, radical bookshops thrived and generations of counter-culture Vancouverites met and mingled. While its radical edge has dulled, “the Drive” is still one of the city’s most popular hangout streets: locals hit the restaurant and bar patios here on languid summer evenings or drop by the busy Italian coffee shops to catch a European soccer game.

Story idea:

Consider one of two “afternoon crawl” stories, one encompassing the Italian coffee shops of Commercial Drive, the other hopping between the indie stores of Main Street. Better still, cover both in one comparison story.

Bonus neighbourhood: Punjabi Market

Continue south on Main Street to 49th Avenue and you’ll come to an area also known as “Little India.” A colourful kaleidoscope of sari stores, Bhangra music shops and some of the region’s best-value curry restaurants, it also hosts several annual cultural events and is an ideal spot for an hour of browsing.

Story idea:

Consider a culinary story on the area's Indian and Pakistani restaurants, interviewing chefs about their favourite dishes.

KITSILANO

Transient students and singles come and go, but a strong core of long-time residents still anchors "Kits," one of the city's most desirable older neighbourhoods. Overlooking the classic Vancouver skyline of sea, Stanley Park and the North Shore mountains, this area was once the hippy capital of the region and is now a comfortable, liberal paradise of well-heeled vegetarians and yoga-moms and yoga-dads. Home to Kitsilano Beach, Vanier Park, Vancouver's largest outdoor pool and a 4th Avenue thoroughfare of tempting shops and popular restaurants and bars, Kits is one of the city's best summertime haunts. Currently enjoying a serious foodie revival, Kits is the city's new hot spot thanks to restaurants such as AnnaLena, Mission and Au Comptoir, as well as chef-favourites Cacao and Mak & Ming.

Story idea:

Find Vancouver's laziest day in the Kitsilano neighbourhood, focusing on the beaches, shops and coffee houses. Ask locals for tips on the best ways to relax here.

SOUTH GRANVILLE

Starting at the south end of Granville Bridge and stretching to 16th Avenue, South Granville Rise (as it's sometimes called) is an ideal on-foot amble for travellers who like to browse art galleries and shops without setting foot in a mall. But this popular Granville Street strip isn't just about window shopping: for contemporary fine dining, the area's French, Asian and Pacific Northwest eateries are among the best in town, while there are also plenty of hearty, home-style cafés for those on lesser budgets, as well as the city's only Moroccan-inspired Miraj Hammam Spa, the perfect place on a rainy Vancouver day.

Story idea:

Take a self-guided walking tour around the historic mansions of Shaughnessy Heights (just off the Granville and 16th Avenue intersection), then recommend the best drink, dine and shop spots of South Granville for your readers.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UBC)

Occupying the waterfront tip of Vancouver's West Side peninsula, the giant UBC campus is a neighbourhood unto itself. It's also packed with a surprising number of attractions for visitors, including the Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver's most important museum with a special emphasis on the First Nations peoples and other cultural communities of British Columbia, and the Haida in particular. Its collection of carvings, totem poles and artefacts is unequalled in North America. In addition, there are also the Beatty Biodiversity Museum and Belkin Gallery, as well as green-thumbed attractions such as the Botanical Garden, Nitobe Memorial Garden and Greenheart Canopy Walkway. The campus is also dotted

with intriguing public art works, and in the neighbouring Pacific Spirit Regional Park you'll find North America's longest clothing-optional beach, the 7.8km long Wreck beach. Check out www.ubc.ca for more information on campus attractions and activities.

Story idea:

Consider a day-out-at-UBC story that covers all the main attractions and offers suggestions on where to eat, shop and grab a bite to eat. Time your visit well and you could include a festival – the UBC Apple Festival (October) is recommended – or a musical performance at the Chan Centre auditorium.

NORTH SHORE

Comprising North Vancouver and West Vancouver and located in the shadow of the towering Coast Mountains, the North Shore is best accessed from the city via the Lions Gate Bridge or on a short scenic SeaBus hop from Waterfront Station. The area's main attractions include North Van's Lonsdale Quay Public Market (www.lonsdalequay.com), Capilano Suspension Bridge Park (www.cap-bridge.com), Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com) and Deep Cove, a tranquil, tree-lined inlet favoured by kayakers and paddleboarders of all skill levels. In addition you can visit two of the city's popular craft distilleries here – Deep Cove and Sons of Vancouver – for a tasting tour..

In contrast, West Vancouver is an established, village-minded community that hugs the start of the Sea-to-Sky highway to Whistler and is close to BC Ferries' Horseshoe Bay terminal. A mix of old cottages and multi-million dollar homes, West Van's attractions include the seawall stroll to Dundarave Pier, Lighthouse Park's leafy trails and Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com), the venue for freestyle skiing and snowboarding at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Story idea:

Visitors alighting from the SeaBus at Lonsdale Quay can head straight to the popular public market to explore before heading out to discover the rest of Lower Lonsdale. Show your readers what's here, including a stroll up Lonsdale Avenue to check out the new shopping and dining options, as well as the waterfront walkways that run east alongside the historic shipyard area.

RICHMOND

Metro Vancouver's vibrant and modern Asian enclave, Richmond is packed with malls, restaurants and stores specifically aimed at its youthful Chinese, Japanese and Korean population. Easily accessed from downtown Vancouver via the Canada Line, it's also a favourite destination for taste-tripping foodies – the Golden Triangle area, for example, is stuffed with a full menu of traditional, fusion and cool contemporary Asian eateries.

But it's not all about Manga bookstores and Hello Kitty here. Richmond's other main attraction is the community of Steveston, an old-school fishing village that

couldn't be more visitor-friendly. Once home to thousands of fish industry workers and dozens of canneries, it's a great spot for seafood dining or a sunset wander along the boardwalk.

Story idea:

Join an old sea salt on his boat for a fishing expedition from Steveston and learn all about the area's rich seafaring heritage. Add visits to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery (www.gulfofgeorgiacannery.com) and the Britannia Heritage Shipyard (www.britannia-hss.ca) to your story.

TEN UNIQUE WAYS TO EXPERIENCE VANCOUVER

1. Loosen your belt and hit as many street food carts as you can.
2. Enjoy a sunset from Third Beach in Stanley Park.
3. Take a ride on the old wooden rollercoaster at Playland (www.pne.ca/playland)... then do it again.
4. Enjoy a free concert at the CBC's Musical Nooners series which, runs Monday through Friday in July and August (noon 'til 1pm).
5. Sip an espresso, people watch and learn to speak Italian on The Drive.
6. Take the Aquabus (www.theaquabus.com) across False Creek to Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com), or the SeaBus across Burrard Inlet to Lonsdale Quay.
7. Go skinny-dipping at Wreck Beach.
8. Sample the widest array of (amazing) sushi restaurants outside Japan.
9. Sip your way through Vancouver's award-winning craft beers in the Brewery District.
10. Taste the region – from apples to zucchini – at one of several farmers' markets (www.eatlocal.org).

TEN VANCOUVER OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

1. Jog, cycle, skate or stroll the Stanley Park seawall.
2. Hike the Grouse Grind...then zipline when you get to the top (www.grousemountain.com).
3. Kayak False Creek with the city as your backdrop. Or hit the tranquil waters of Deep Cove.
4. Take a sailing lesson at Jericho Beach.
5. Ski or snowboard at Cypress Mountain.
6. Hit the mountain bike trails of the North Shore – the birthplace of freeride downhill mountain biking.
7. Kiteboard, windsurf or paddle board off Kitsilano Beach.
8. Go stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) at English Bay or Jericho Beach – and for an added challenge, try SUP yoga.
9. Try tubing or snowshoeing at Cypress Mountain.
10. Dive into the outdoor swimming pools in Stanley Park or at Kitsilano Beach.

TEN FREEBIE VANCOUVER ACTIVITIES

1. Visit the Olympic Cauldron near Canada Place and spot cool public art-works nearby, including the Digital Orca installation by local artist and author Douglas Coupland.
2. Check out Christ Church Cathedral (www.cathedral.vancouver.bc.ca), a neo-Gothic treasure with lovely stained glass windows.
3. Admire the totem poles in Stanley Park, then nip into the Lost Lagoon Nature House (www.stanleyparkecology.ca) for a free or low-cost bird-spotting walk.
4. Dive into the stunning West Coast rainforest at Seymour Conservation Reserve. Or hit the trails of Stanley Park or UBC's Pacific Spirit Regional Park.
5. Explore the environment at North Vancouver's fascinating Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre (www.dnv.org/ecology).
6. Pop into The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver (www.fairmont.com/hotelvancouver), the city's grandest old-school hotel. In the lobby, don't miss historic photos and a copy of the menu enjoyed by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth when they dined here in 1939.
7. Observe one of nature's greatest life-cycle stories at North Vancouver's Capilano River Hatchery. Juvenile salmon are raised on site, and you can see them here before they return to the river. During the fall, returning salmon struggle up the fish ladders to spawn.
8. Visit the Hastings Mill Store Museum in Kitsilano. It's the oldest building in Vancouver and houses a collection of historic local artefacts.
9. Head out for a summer picnic at Burnaby's spectacular Buntzen Lake, a natural reservoir surrounded by steep, forested crags.
10. Muse over cool artwork at three free galleries: the Contemporary Art Gallery (www.contemporaryartgallery.ca), the Pendulum Gallery (www.pendulumgallery.bc.ca) and the Rennie Collection at Wing Sang (www.renniecollection.org).

Extra!

Expand your story about experiencing Vancouver for free with a few tips on how to save on must-see attractions. For example, on Tuesdays after 5 p.m. the Vancouver Art Gallery (www.vanartgallery.bc.ca) offers by-donation entry, while the UBC Museum of Anthropology (www.moa.ubc.ca) offers reduced entry.

TEN THINGS TO DO ON A RAINY DAY IN VANCOUVER

1. Recharge in the tropical heat of glass-domed Bloedel Floral Conservatory at Queen Elizabeth Park (www.vancouverparks.ca).
2. Take a culinary tour of Granville Island Public Market with the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts or Vancouver Foodie Tours.
3. Enjoy the tranquillity of weekend afternoon tea by the fire at Bacchus Lounge in the Wedgewood Hotel (www.wedgewoodhotel.com).
4. Warm your insides with a tongue-tingling jalapeno or chilli pepper-and-chocolate gelato from La Casa Gelato (www.lacasagelato.com), where more than 500 flavours await.

5. Hit the luxe Willow Stream Spa at the Fairmont Pacific Rim (www.fairmont.com/pacificrim).
6. Embrace the rain with a guided rainforest tour and gourmet picnic lunch (www.rockwoodadventures.com) in Lighthouse Park (seasonal). Discover lichens, mosses and some of the Lower Mainland's oldest cedar trees.
7. Select reading material (or take in a free author reading) at the architecturally exquisite Vancouver Public Library (www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca).
8. Explore the underwater world (but stay dry) at the Vancouver Aquarium (www.vanaqua.org).
9. Get lost in the incredible Museum of Anthropology (www.moa.ubc.ca). Arthur Erickson's spectacular glass and concrete space gives the collection of majestic totem poles freedom to tower.
10. Catch a matinée. Duck out of the rain and into one of Vancouver's live theatres – walk-ups are welcome at the Granville Island Stage and Waterfront Theatres on Granville Island, and the Firehall theatre downtown. Check www.ticketstonight.ca to see what's on or to buy half-price, day-of tickets to select shows.

TEN ROMANTIC THINGS TO DO IN VANCOUVER

1. Book a private horse-drawn carriage tour around Stanley Park – but make sure you stop and smell the roses at the rose garden (www.stanleyparktours.com).
2. Laughter is the foundation of any relationship, so head for a night of improv comedy presented by the Vancouver TheatreSports League (www.vtsl.com).
3. Discover your love for whales, as well as each other, on a boat trek with Vancouver Whale Watch (www.vancouverwhalewatch.com).
4. Take a couples class at Dirty Apron Cooking School (www.dirt-yapron.com).
5. Have dinner at Grouse Mountain's (www.grousemountain.com) Observatory Restaurant, overlooking the twinkling lights of downtown Vancouver.
6. Grab an ice cream from one of the many parlours on Denman street and head to English Bay to cosy up by a log and catch the best sunset in town.
7. Paddle in Burnaby's Deer Lake together on a sunny summer afternoon.
8. Get in the mood with a Couples Retreat treatment at CHI Spa in the Shangri-La Hotel (www.shangri-la.com/vancouver/shangrila/).
9. Wind down with a sunset dinner cruise (www.boatcruises.com) on the still waters between English Bay and Kitsilano.
10. In winter, hire skates and hit the cozy Robson Square ice rink together.

TEN FAMILY-FRIENDLY VANCOUVER ACTIVITIES

1. Check out the huge free waterpark at Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com), then dry off in the nearby Kids Market. In late May, Granville Island is also the home to the International Children's Festival (www.childrensfestival.ca).

2. Hit Science World at TELUS World of Science (www.scienceworld.ca) for a plethora of hands-on activities, including blowing giant soap bubbles, playing a piano with your feet and freezing your shadow on a wall.
3. Sway across the Capilano River at Capilano Suspension Bridge Park (www.capbridge.com), complete with a towering rope bridge, rainforest nature trails and Cliffwalk, a walkway clinging to the canyon's steep rock face.
4. Head to idyllic Kitsilano Beach for a day of sunny fun. Younger kids can beachcomb and hit the playground, while teens can sample the swimming pool or tennis courts.
5. Stroll from Kits Beach to nearby Vanier Park, stopping along the way at the Museum of Vancouver (www.museumofvancouver.ca), Vancouver Maritime Museum (www.vancouvermaritimemuseum.com) and H.R. MacMillan Space Centre (www.hrmacmillanspacecentre.com).
6. Heading across Burrard Inlet by SeaBus or travelling around the city by SkyTrain are highlights for many visiting kids – try for a seat at the front of a SkyTrain and they'll feel like they're driving (www.translink.ca).
7. Visit Maplewood Farm (www.maplewoodfarm.bc.ca) for a close-up look at 200 animals and birds. Spring is a favourite time - that's when the babies are born.
8. Discover the aquatic menagerie at the highly popular Vancouver Aquarium (www.vanaqua.org), where behind-the-scenes trainer tours and animal encounters are also available.
9. Discover what life was really like for the region's cannery workers at the kid-tastic Gulf of Georgia Cannery in Steveston (www.gulfofgeorgiacannery.com); or visit Fort Langley National Historic Site, where kids (and adults) can pan for gold (www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/bc/langley/visit.aspx).
10. Let your kids run, jump and tumble at the BC Sports Hall of Fame (www.bcsportshalloffame.com), where the hands-on activities are just as popular as the displays of sporting memorabilia.

TEN VANCOUVER ACTIVITIES FOR MATURE TRAVELLERS

1. Cheer on the Vancouver Canadians during a nostalgic afternoon of baseball at Nat Bailey Stadium (www.canadiansbaseball.com).
2. Enjoy a summer evening Shakespeare performance at Bard on the Beach (www.bardonthebeach.org), where the backdrop is a stunning view of the moonlit mountains.
3. Relive the pioneering past at Burnaby Village Museum (www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca), a replica turn-of-the-century village next to Deer Lake Park. Don't miss a ride on the 1912-era carousel.
4. Enjoy some cool tunes at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival (www.coastaljazz.ca), held at indoor and outdoor venues across the city every June and July.
5. Cut loose on a sunny summer afternoon in Stanley Park. Check out the totem poles and rose garden, then have a late afternoon tea at the elegant Tea House in Stanley Park (www.vancouverdine.com/teahouse).

6. Drive to Steveston in Richmond and stroll the restored fisherman's wharf, now teeming with gift stores and some of the region's best fish and chip restaurants.
7. Head to Vancouver's annual Pacific National Exhibition (www.pne.bc.ca), a decades-old tradition of livestock shows and home and garden displays with free live concerts from big-name artists such as the Monkees, Culture Club and Pointer Sisters. Don't miss out on the deep-fried food favourites and legendary barbecue stalls.
8. Bask in the tranquillity of Chinatown's Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (www.vancouverchinesegarden.com).
9. Take in the city from the water with a narrated harbour cruise (www.boatcruises.com) aboard an old-style paddle steamer.
10. Explore the city's art collection at the celebrated Vancouver Art Gallery (www.vanartgallery.bc.ca) – look out for Emily Carr paintings of the region's verdant West Coast wilderness on the top floor.

TEN ECO WAYS TO EXPERIENCE VANCOUVER

1. Rent a bike or rollerblades and marvel at Vancouver's green, urban sanctuary by cruising the seawall in Stanley Park.
2. Reflect on other great Vancouver green spaces at Queen Elizabeth Park (www.vancouverparks.ca), UBC Botanical Garden (www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca) and Dr Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (www.vancouverchinesegarden.com).
3. Check out the city views from the water by kayaking or stand up paddle-boarding your way along False Creek (www.ecomarine.com).
4. Get a birds-eye view from above by ziplining across mountain peaks (www.grousemountain.com).
5. Make a sustainable choice with fresh West Coast seafood by choosing a restaurant participating in the Ocean Wise program (www.oceanwise.ca).
6. Book a tour with Edible Canada and learn why Vancouverites "eat local" (www.ediblecanada.com).
7. Take the pod elevator to the top of Grouse Mountain's Eye of the Wind (which has the capacity to offset up to 25 percent of the resort's energy needs) for an amazing view from a working power turbine (www.grouse-mountain.com).
8. Take a self-guided tour of the city's greenest buildings with the Green Buildings Audio Tour (<http://greenbuildingaudiotours.com>). You can download the guides as podcasts, listened to them online, or dial into them on location through your phone wherever you see one of the Green Buildings Tour signs dotted around the city.
9. Take a walk on Vancouver's aerial trail system at the UBC Botanical Garden and learn about local ecology, nature and conservation (www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca).
10. Get a day pass and bus, SkyTrain or SeaBus your way around Vancouver (www.translink.bc.ca).

Extra!

Major environmental movement Greenpeace was founded in Vancouver. The city is also home to David Suzuki, Canada's most celebrated ecological scientist and founder of the David Suzuki Foundation.

TEN OFF-THE-BEATEN-TRACK VANCOUVER ACTIVITIES

1. Check out the darker side of the city's history at the Vancouver Police Museum (www.vancouverpolicemuseum.ca); in summer, join a "Sins of the City" walking tour.
2. Join the locals for an evening of fun, art, music and performance at FUSE, the Vancouver Art Gallery's (www.vanart.bc.ca) regular nighttime social event.
3. Enjoy watching a spirited Vancouver Roller Derby game (www.terminalcityrollergirls.com).
4. Pitch 'n putt golf into the twilight hours in Stanley Park.
5. Check out the city's wackiest food cart finds, including Japanese-style hot dogs, Korean chicken sandwiched between waffles and Chai-flavoured cotton candy.
6. Eat your way through the mayhem of the biggest night market in North America at the Richmond Night Market, which features over a hundred vendors selling tasty food from around the world (<http://richmondnightmarket.com>).
7. Sip your way around the city while burning calories on a guided cycling tour of Vancouver's growing craft beer scene. (www.cyclevancouver.com).
8. Witness some of the wackiest shows on offer at the annual Vancouver Fringe Festival (www.vancouverfringe.com) in September.
9. Take a virtual flight gliding across the many man-made and natural marvels of Canada, complete with wind, scents and mist (www.flyovercanada.com).
10. Speed around the racetrack in a go-kart at the Richmond Go-Kart Track (www.richmondgokarts.com).

ATTRACTION STORIES

The Vancouver region is home to dozens of well-known visitor attractions, activities and landmarks as well as hundreds of smaller sites that only the locals seem to know. Here are distinct recommendations for your stories, along with suggested angles for coverage.

CAPILANO SUSPENSION BRIDGE PARK

(www.capbridge.com)

One of Western Canada's top visitor magnets, the 140-metre (460-feet) suspension bridge wobbles 70 metres (230 feet) above the roiling Capilano River Canyon. But although the bridge has been a celebrated attraction since the Victorian era – when crinolined ladies sashayed across its length – the attraction has never rested on its laurels. Treetops Adventure – a series of seven suspended walkways between some of its towering trees – was added in 2004, while in 2011

Cliffwalk was opened. A steel and glass walkway clinging to the side of the steep rock face, it offers a dramatic, eagle-eye view of the rainforest.

Story idea:

Interview the engineers behind Capilano's attractions – and compare their work to the original hemp rope bridge (now replaced with steel cables).

VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

(www.vanaqua.org)

The Stanley Park home of 9,000 aquatic animals – from friendly beluga whales to mesmerizing tanks of glowing jellyfish – the aquarium is one of the city's most popular family attractions. But it's not all about salty shenanigans: there's a stroll-through rainforest with birds, butterflies and caymans and a 4-D Experience movie theatre. In 2014, the Aquarium celebrated the largest expansion in its 58-year history. The new sustainable, state-of-the-art building has almost doubled the existing gallery space. At the heart of the expansion, the Teck Connections Gallery, has state-of-the art features including 360-degree, 185-foot digital screens alive with stunning aquatic imagery. If you really want to treat the kids, consider a behind-the-scenes tour or a sleepover beside the beluga tanks.

Story idea:

Create a day-in-the-life piece – perhaps with video accompaniment – on the aquarium, including talks with trainers and close-up visits with celebrated animals in the collection. Keep in mind that there's a strong focus on conservation here and perhaps make that a leading theme of your story.

GROUSE MOUNTAIN

(www.grousemountain.com)

Just 20 minutes from downtown and the self-styled "Peak of Vancouver", Grouse is among the most popular four-season outdoor attractions on the West Coast. Its summit complex includes casual and high-end dining, gift shops and a movie theatre – it's also the access point for a host of activities. In winter, this can mean skiing, snowboarding snowshoeing and ice-skating, while in summer there are alpine meadow hikes and viewings of two orphaned grizzly bears in their expansive enclosure. Adrenaline junkies will enjoy the ziptrek course and the Eye of the Wind turbine viewing tower. This 65-metre (215-foot) working turbine generates electricity and is the only one in the world that has a public viewing pod accessed via an elevator. The highest man-made structure in the Lower Mainland, it offers spectacular clear-day views across the region. New for summer 2016, experience the Skyride Surf Adventure, travelling 1,610 metres up Grouse Mountain on a special viewing platform attached to the rooftop of a Gondola.

Story idea:

There's a guaranteed white Christmas every year at Grouse and this is one of the best times to visit. Check out the month-long celebration, ranging from sleigh rides and petting reindeer to Santa visits. Follow it with a snowshoe fondue tour. New for 2015, follow the twinkling Light Walk around Blue Grouse Lake, lined by

glowing lanterns. And don't forget to end your story with a hot chocolate at the bar – if it's clear, you'll have a great view of the city lights below.

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

(www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

The ever-popular VAG reflects the city's position as a nationally renowned art capital. The gallery offers changing exhibitions of historical and contemporary art by regional, national, and international artists, plus a permanent collection of Emily Carr masterworks. Look out for shows by local photo conceptualists like Jeff Wall and the iconic vintage shots of old Vancouver by Fred Herzog. And if people-watching is more your scene, check out the gallery's upstairs café – it's one of downtown's best summer patios.

Story ideas:

Check out one of Vancouver's best alternative nightlife options: the quarterly FUSE event when the gallery opens late for live music and performance, with a nightclub vibe. Consider making this part of a wider story on Vancouver's lesser-known – but locally popular – nightlife options.

Photo story:

Pick up a copy of the Fred Herzog Photographs book and choose some vintage images of iconic Vancouver buildings, businesses, attractions and streetscapes. Re-photograph these as they appear today.

UBC MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

(www.moa.ubc.ca)

One of Canada's finest collections of regional First Nations art and artefacts is just the starting point at this celebrated UBC attraction. A curator tour is recommended to contextualize the galleries of exhibits, which also includes anthropological displays from cultures around the world, including everything from European ceramics to Chinese opera costumes.

Story idea:

Consider an immersive story on the region's First Nations culture for your readers, including interviews with museum curators and local artists. Create a slideshow of museum artefacts to accompany your story.

SCIENCE WORLD AT TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE

(www.scienceworld.ca)

Built for the Expo '86 world's fair, this landmark attraction under the silver geodesic dome near the site of the 2010 Olympic Village has been attracting families ever since it opened. It includes hands-on exhibits, the world's largest Omnimax cinema (five storeys high and 27m in diameter) and plenty of popular displays for kids of all ages. There are also regular adult nights when the facility takes on a nightclub ambiance.

Story idea:

Make Science World a foundation of your story on Vancouver for visiting families, including as many of the city's top – and lesser-known – kid-tastic attractions, dining options and shopping ideas as you can find.

MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER (www.museumofvancouver.ca)

H.R. MACMILLAN SPACE CENTRE (www.spacecentre.ca)

VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM (www.vancouvermaritimemuseum.com)

Vanier Park, a short seawall stroll from Granville Island, is home to three popular attractions for Vancouver visitors. The Museum of Vancouver covers the city's social history and also runs fascinating temporary exhibitions; the Space Centre is a kid-friendly attraction dedicated to exploring the universe – with plenty of interactive action; and the Maritime Museum illuminates the region's salty nautical heritage.

Story ideas:

Start on Granville Island, stroll to Vanier Park's three attractions and continue along the seawall to Kitsilano Beach for a colourful day out story on Vancouver's West Side. Chat with the locals you meet along the way and ask them for dining, coffee and shopping tips.

TOP 10 ATTRACTION GEMS IN METRO VANCOUVER

Create a story on the trail of Vancouver's smaller but rewarding visitor attractions. Draw from the following:

Vancouver Police Museum (www.vancouverpolicemuseum.ca)

Gulf of Georgia Cannery (www.gulfofgeorgiacannery.com)

Christ Church Cathedral (www.cathedral.vancouver.bc.ca)

Vancouver Lookout (www.vancouverlookout.com)

Roedde House Museum (www.roeddehouse.org)

B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and Museum (www.bcsportshalloffame.com)

Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art (www.billreidgallery.ca)

Lost Lagoon Nature House (www.stanleyparkecology.ca)

Burnaby Heritage Village (www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca)

Hastings Mill Store Museum (www.hastings-mill-museum.ca)

PARKS AND GARDENS

The West Coast's temperate climate and soft, plentiful rains encourage a riot of flowers throughout Metro Vancouver, sustaining an array of gardens, parks and green spaces. B.C.'s provincial flower is the dogwood (*Cornus Nuttallii*) and in spring, the region's spreading dogwood trees are bright with fragile, creamy white blossoms.

STANLEY PARK

(www.vancouverparks.ca)

Vancouver's leading recreational space and the city's green heart, Stanley Park is a magnificent 404 hectares (1,000 acres) of dense West Coast forest. Dozens

of marked trails enable roaming through this "jungle" of giant trees while an 8.8-kilometre (5.5-mile) seawall pathway provides some of the best sea-to-sky mountain views anywhere in the world. Other highlights include a mini-forest of intricate totem poles, excellent family-friendly beaches, and a large outdoor swimming pool overlooking the waterfront. One of the best ways to see what's on offer is to take a narrated one-hour Stanley Park Horse-Drawn Tour (www.stanley-park.com).

The park is home to an array of visitor attractions, including the family-friendly Vancouver Aquarium (www.vanaqua.org), the Miniature Railway and the Nature House at Lost Lagoon (www.stanleyparkecology.ca). Others might prefer the rose or rhododendron gardens. The park is also a great spot on a summer evening – take in an al fresco show at Malkin Bowl's Theatre under the Stars (www.tuts.ca), catch a free movie at Second Beach (www.freshair-cinema.ca/summercinema/) or just listen out for the boom of the Nine O'clock gun, which sounds every evening. Diners are well-catered to in the park – there are several lunch and dinner options, including the Teahouse, one of Vancouver's most popular places for Afternoon Tea (www.vancouverdine.com/teahouse/).

Story idea

Consider a "day out in Stanley Park" story that shows readers the full range of what's available here. You could start with a jog or cycle around the seawall; dip into attractions like the Vancouver Aquarium and Lost Lagoon Nature House; dine at one or two of the park's popular restaurants; catch a show at the Malkin Bowl; peruse the plethora of statues dotted around the park; and – finally – catch a jaw-dropping sunset at Third Beach.

Plus:

Interview a park gardener, Vancouver Aquarium trainer or a Lost Lagoon Nature House expert.

Extra!

Completed in sections over many years, the 8.8-kilometre (5.5-mile) Stanley Park seawall is popular with walkers, joggers, rollerbladers and cyclists. Walking the park's entire seawall stretch takes two to four hours (less by bike) and you'll be treated to spectacular ocean and mountain views along the way – plus plenty of beach and forest pit stops if you need a rest. And keep your eyes peeled for wild-life, including graceful blue herons and skittering sea otters.

But the seawall isn't just about Stanley Park. The entire 22-kilometre (13.7-mile) stretch runs from the Convention Centre to Stanley Park and then via False Creek and Granville Island to Kitsilano – perfect for a long day out by bike and a great story idea for urban adventurers.

VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN

(www.vandusengarden.org)

When the Shaughnessy Golf Club moved a few kilometres south in 1960, the aim was to turn the remaining 22.25-hectare (55-acre) course into a posh subdivision of sprawling mansions. The local gentry, unconvinced their neighbourhood needed more homes, lobbied the city and provincial governments, as well as the Vancouver Foundation, then led by W.J. VanDusen, to buy the grounds and turn them into a botanical garden. The result: a world-class bed of flowers and a ranking among North America's top 10 garden attractions.

Set against the distant backdrop of the North Shore mountains, VanDusen offers a network of 40 small, specialized gardens. In spring, its Rhododendron Walk blazes with colour, while the nearby Korean Pavilion is a focal point for the garden's Asian plant collection. Planted in 1981, there is also a maze, walled by 1,000 pyramidal cedars, that's a children's delight and a favoured location for TV and movie producers. In winter, the gardens are famed for their Christmas light display.

In 2011, the park opened a \$21.9 million Visitor Centre. A chic, eco-friendly structure with a petal-shaped green roof, it comprises a shop, library, café and exhibition space.

BLOEDEL FLORAL CONSERVATORY AND QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

(www.vancouverparks.ca)

Vancouver's "Little Mountain," the city's highest point, is a 150-metre (500-foot) granite outcropping that, for years, was an industrial rock quarry. Now, it's a spectacular setting for a 52-hectare (130-acre) park-and-garden complex that receives six million visitors a year – second only to the much larger Stanley Park. There are also spectacular views of the city, framed by the dramatic North Shore mountains.

Now collaboratively managed by VanDusen Botanical Garden, the park's centrepiece is the Bloedel Floral Conservatory, a huge glass bubble that's one of the largest domed greenhouses in the world. It is home to hundreds of exotic plants and dozens of wandering birds and, with its controlled climate, is one of the best places to avoid the rain in the city.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

UBC Botanical Garden (www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org): The oldest and one of Canada's finest botanical gardens is really five gardens in one, each with a different theme and character. These include the Asian Garden, with its fragile magnolias and 400 varieties of brilliant rhododendrons; the B.C. Native Garden, displaying more than 3,500 plants from across the province; the Alpine Garden, featuring rare, low-growing mountain plants from Australia, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa; the Physic Garden, which re-creates a 16th-century monastic herb garden; and the Food Garden, an amazing patchwork of raised beds and more than 180 fruit trees. A recent addition to the garden is the Greenheart Canopy Walkway, a guided nature stroll on suspended bridges through the trees.

Nitobe Memorial Garden (www.nitobe.org): Named after Dr. Inazo Nitobe, a Japanese scholar and diplomat, this tranquil garden features gently curving paths flanked by carefully-placed rocks, trees and shrubs. Visitors can wander counter-clockwise, accompanied by the soothing sounds of the lake, waterfalls and tiny streams, and experience a host of native and imported plants, azaleas, maples and flowering cherry trees that colour the gardens year-round.

DR. SUN YAT-SEN CLASSICAL CHINESE GARDEN

(www.vancouverchinesegarden.com)

This treasure of tranquillity is valued for its rarity. Built at a cost of over \$5.3 million in 1986, it was the first, full-scale classical Chinese garden built outside China. All components of the garden were carefully selected from nature or hand-built by skilled artisans in China. These 52 artisans then brought to Vancouver all the materials and traditional tools needed to spend 13 months building this historical, architectural and horticultural masterpiece. Unlike in a Western garden, the major feature of a classical Chinese garden is not necessarily the plants. An artful blending of architecture, culturally significant plants, naturally sculpted rocks and elegantly winding jade-green waterways follow ancient Chinese garden traditions. The garden runs a popular series of evening concerts in the summer.

LIGHTHOUSE PARK

The smooth rock bluff surrounding the old-fashioned Point Atkinson Lighthouse in this West Vancouver park is an ideal spot for picnicking and, particularly on sunny weekends, you'll find lots of couples here – and it's only a 20-minute highway drive from downtown Vancouver. During the summer, the park is a favoured location for wedding parties having their pictures taken. The lighthouse stands amidst some of the Lower Mainland's oldest Douglas firs, accompanied by eagle nests and the twisted, rust-red trunks of nearby arbutus trees.

PACIFIC SPIRIT REGIONAL PARK

Nestled between the city and the UBC campus, this giant wilderness park is ideal for a spot of tree-hugging away from the bustle of the downtown core. Striped with walking, hiking and biking trails, the park also includes Camosun Bog, a wetland haven for native bird and plant species.

PARK AND TILFORD GARDENS AND SHOPS

(<http://parkandtilford.com>)

Created in 1969, these glorious gardens are a popular spot for summer weddings – and it's easy to understand why. The eight themed gardens range from the roses and cool formality of the White Garden to the colourful spring bulbs and spreading annuals of the Display Garden, while the Oriental Garden showcases traditional bonsai trees and a tranquil pond. Located on the site of a former winery/distillery, the gardens also offer a popular Christmas light display.

Story idea

Appeal to your green-thumbed readers by taking a park and garden walk around Vancouver. Include as much diversity as you can – from the formalism of the Dr

Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden and the Nitobe Memorial Garden to the rainforest wilderness of Pacific Spirit Regional Park. Interview gardeners at VanDusen Botanical Garden and the Vancouver Parks Board for insights on the challenges and rewards of growing in the region. End your day in the city's world-renowned green gem: checking out the gardens, forests and beaches of Stanley Park.

UNIQUE VANCOUVER STORIES

Here's a selection of quirky angles on the city that appeal to readers looking beyond the usual activities and attractions.

NEON UTOPIA

In the 1950s, Vancouver was home to the largest neon company in the world and second only to Shanghai in neon per capita: 19,000 neon signs, or one for every 18 residents. At the time, it was considered by pilots to be the best-illuminated city in North America. The largest beacon was the still-in-place BowMac sign on Broadway. While only a few of the original signs remain (check out the dazzling one on display at the Save on Meats diner <http://saveonmeats.ca>), neon is making a comeback in downtown's Granville Street entertainment district, where new businesses are being encouraged to add bold exterior lighting that echoes the area's neon-lit past. The Museum of Vancouver has a popular exhibition on Vancouver's history of neon signs (*Neon Vancouver, Ugly Vancouver*) with more than 25 working neon signs, including the Drake Hotel, Regent Tailors, Southgate Cleaners, Owl Drugs, Agnew Diamonds, and crowd favourite Smilin' Buddha Cabaret.

TALL TALES

Vancouver's Shangri-La building became the city's tallest tower when it opened in 2010, a few blocks from One Wall Centre, which had previously held the accolade. But there's been a succession of other tall towers around the city since it was founded in 1886. In this story, visit some of Vancouver's historic towering gems – many of which were the tallest buildings of their day. These include the Sun Tower, Dominion Building, Marine Building and the Harbour Centre's Vancouver Lookout.

SECRET TUNNELS

Stories abound about the city's alleged network of secret underground tunnels. Chinatown is supposed to be criss-crossed with them – road crews sometimes unearth them when they're working in the area. And there's definitely a tunnel running from the main Canada Post building on West Georgia Street. The disused route – it runs under Homer Street and along Cordova Street towards the waterfront – was once used by Canada Post for a Halloween party.

DRINKING WITH GASSY JACK

Vancouver was founded on booze – just ask the jaunty statue of John "Gassy Jack" Leighton, standing atop his whisky barrel in Maple Tree Square. But while Gastown was once a no-go skid row area, a recent renaissance – helped by

recognition as a National Historic Site – has seen it become the city’s favourite night spot. Take inspiration from old Gassy and hit the area’s cobbled streets to locate its best bars. Consider a story focused on B.C. craft beers brewed by the likes of Howe Sound Brewing, Phillips Brewing and Vancouver’s very own Storm Brewing or go on a cocktail trail taking in craft cocktails at Pidgin, the Diamond, L’Abattoir and Pourhouse.

“OH, CANADA!”

For more than 25 years at noon each day, a set of horns atop a downtown Vancouver building played the first four notes of Canada’s national anthem, *O Canada*. The 10 aluminium horns were so powerful they could be heard over much of the city, and those nearby had to plug their ears. When the building converted to a condominium in the mid-90s, the ‘Heritage Horns’ as they are known were moved to the top of the luxury Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel at Canada Place. Want to hear them? Stop to listen at midday and you won’t be disappointed.

BRYAN ADAMS

You could easily wander by the massive brick edifice at the corner of Powell and Columbia streets without noticing it, but the building enjoys two relatively impressive claims to fame: it is the oldest brick building in the city and the only one that regularly plays host to the world’s rock and roll elite. Built in 1886 as a wholesale grocery, the building almost immediately became Vancouver’s first city hall when the great fire of Gastown wiped out the neighbourhood. In the following decades, it survived a few more blazes, becoming increasingly battered and eventually abandoned. Its luck changed in 1991 when Canadian singer Bryan Adams bought the place for \$1 million, later building an open-air putting green, parking lot and recording studio. In 1998, the Warehouse Studio received a City of Vancouver Heritage Award for outstanding restoration of a historic building.

FLOATING SERVICE STATION

Coal Harbour’s Chevron outlet is the city’s only self-service floating gas station. Selling its fuel sans road tax, it offers some of the best deals on gas and diesel in the city – too bad you need a boat to get to it. When the barges were first towed to their spots just off Deadman’s Island in the early 1940s, there were originally five. Now only Chevron remains. In this city of fair-weather sailors, most of the station’s winter business comes from tugs and trawlers, and even the floatplanes that land nearby fuel elsewhere.

STANLEY PARK’S STATUE MENAGERIE

Locals have been erecting statues in Vancouver’s favourite green space almost since it opened to the public in the 1880s. But while the figure of Lord Stanley near Stanley Park’s entrance is well-known, there are many other testaments and memorials that are worth hunting down. See if you can find the large Robert Burns statue; the memorial to US president W.G. Harding; the speedy-looking figure of sprinter Harry Jerome; the *Girl in a Wetsuit* bronze that recalls a certain Copenhagen statue; and the tiny seawall marker that recognizes James Cunningham, the stonemason who spend 32 years leading the completion of the park’s seawall trail.

Extra!

While the Stanley Park end of Robson Street is now packed with South Asian eateries, it used to be the heart of a different expat community. German immigrants colonized the area during the first half of the last century and, until the 1970s, it was commonly referred to as “Robsonstrasse” by locals. German shops and schnitzel restaurants lined the strip here and it was the best place in town to buy European cakes and chocolates from a host of family-run bakeries and confectioners.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Vancouver’s kaleidoscopic cultural scene reflects the West Coast’s diversity and cosmopolitan spirit. Whether in visual, performing, literary or media arts, this positive influence fuels events throughout Metro Vancouver. The region is home to Chinese and Japanese gardens, festivals celebrating cultures from Portugal to the Caribbean and regular events showcasing dance, film, theatre, music, cuisine and the First Nations. For the latest on what’s happening in Vancouver, contact Tickets Tonight (www.ticketstonight.ca) or visit the booth at Tourism Vancouver’s downtown Visitor Centre.

Story ideas:

Vancouver’s event roster has exploded in recent years. Consider a story on the city’s festival renaissance, profiling some of Vancouver’s biggest summer events from the list below. These could include the Celebration of Light fireworks competition, Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, Talking Stick which showcases the best emerging and established Indigenous artists, Vancouver International Film Festival and the Vancouver International Jazz Festival.

Alternatively, highlight some of Vancouver’s many community festivals to illustrate the city’s rich diversity. Consider the Vaisakhi Day Parade, Greek Day, Taiwanese Cultural Festival and Powell Street Festival.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

MULTICULTURAL AND COMMUNITY

- *Chinese New Year Festival & Parade* (January or February; www.vancouver-chinatown.com): annual celebration of the biggest event in the Chinese calendar.
- *CelticFest Vancouver* (mid-March; www.celticfestvancouver.com): downtown’s annual St. Patrick’s Day parade and Irish cultural celebration.
- *Vaisakhi Day Parade* (mid-April): annual celebration in the Punjabi Market area.
- *Hyack Festival* (mid-May; www.hyack.bc.ca): New Westminster’s annual parade and community showcase.

- *City of Bhangra* (www.cityofbhangra.com; late May to June): nine-days of energetic dance and drums from local and international bhangra exponents.
- *West 4th Khatsalano Street Party* (www.khatsahlano.com; July): a one-day free celebration of music, food and live performance on West 4th Street from Burrard to Macdonald; Vancouver's largest free music and arts festival.
- *Panda Night Market in Richmond* (June to mid-September; <http://panda-market.ca>) and *Richmond Night Market* (<http://richmondnightmarket.com>): giant weekend array of food stalls, market hawkers and live performance.
- *Festival d'été Francophone* (mid-June; www.lecentreculturel.com): showcase of French-Canadian arts and culture.
- *Car Free Vancouver* (mid-June; www.carfreevancouver.org): communities across the city close their main streets for a day of food, live music and family-friendly fun.
- *Greek Summer Festival* (late June to early July; www.vancouvergreeksummerfest.com): Greek community festival.
- *Indian Summer* (July; www.indiansummerfestival.ca): popular festival of contemporary arts, culture and performance from India and beyond.
- *Caribbean Days Festival* (late July; www.caribbeandays.ca): annual celebration of the city's Caribbean side.
- *Vancouver Pride Week* (July to August; www.vancouverpride.ca): giant celebration of gay and lesbian culture as well as the city's biggest street parade.
- *Powell Street Festival* (early August; www.powellstreetfestival.com): showcase of Vancouver's Japanese heritage.
- *Vancouver Chinatown Festival* (early August; www.vancouver-chinatown.com): celebration of Chinese culture.
- *Taiwanese Cultural Festival* (early September; www.taiwanfest.ca): annual event focussing on Taiwanese arts and culture.

MUSIC

- *Vancouver International Jazz Festival* (June to July; www.coastaljazz.ca): giant annual showcase of live jazz performances.
- *Vancouver Folk Music Festival* (mid-July; www.thefestival.bc.ca): popular weekend folk celebration held at Jericho Beach.
- *Early Music Festival* (July to August; www.earlymusic.bc.ca): showcase of historic, choral and classical music.
- *MusicFest Vancouver* (August; www.musicfestvancouver.ca): large celebration of classical, jazz and world music.

PERFORMANCE

- *PuSh International Performing Arts Festival* (mid-January to early February; www.pushfestival.ca): multi-disciplined platform for theatre, dance and music.

- *Vancouver Sketch Comedy Fest* (January; www.vancouverstetch-fest.com): growing showcase of sketch comic talent from across North America.
- *Chutzpah!* (mid-February; www.chutzpahfestival.com): showcase of international music, dance and performance.
- *Vancouver International Dance Festival* (March; www.vidf.ca): diverse dance arts celebrated at venues around the city.
- *Vancouver Fashion Week* (mid-March; www.vanfashionweek.com): annual catwalk extravaganza presenting the work of local and international designers.
- *Eco Fashion Week* (April & October; www.ecofashion-week.com): Runway shows, seminars and events promoting sustainable brands and practices in fashion.
- *Bard on the Beach* (late May to September; www.bardonthebeach.org): popular festival of Shakespeare plays, performed under tents in Vanier Park.
- *Dancing on the Edge* (July; www.dancingontheedge.org): roster of electrifying contemporary dance performances.
- *Theatre Under the Stars* (July & August; www.tuts.ca): two al fresco musicals performed every summer at the Malkin Bowl stage in Stanley Park.
- *Vancouver International Fringe Festival* (September; www.vancouverfringe.com): cornucopia of live dramatic and comic stage shows performed at venues around Granville Island.

FILM

- *Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival* (mid-February; www.vimff.org): showcasing outdoor-themed movies with a 'Fall Speaker Series' in October/November.
- Projecting Change Film Festival (April; <http://projectingchange.ca>): forum for film and dialogue about social and environmental issues.
- *DOXA Documentary Film Festival* (May; www.doxafestival.ca): great documentary festival from Canada and beyond.
- *Vancouver Queer Film Festival* (mid-August; <http://queerfilmfestival.ca>): celebration of gay and lesbian movies.
- *Vancouver Latin American Film Festival* (August-September; www.vlaff.org): the best movies and documentaries from the region's rich filmmaking culture.
- *Vancouver International Film Festival* (late September to mid-October; www.viff.org): giant festival of movies from around the world, plus workshops and events for film fans and industry.
- *Vancouver Asian Film Festival* (early November; www.vaff.org): forum for independent North American Asian filmmakers to showcase their work.

LITERARY

- *Word on the Street* (late September; www.thewordonthestreet.ca): weekend of free readings and family-friendly events for bookish types.
- *Vancouver International Writers & Readers Festival* (mid-October; www.writersfest.bc.ca): dozens of readings and appearances from world's best writers attracting booklovers to venues around the city.

FOOD AND DRINK

- *Dine Out Vancouver Festival* (mid-January to early February; www.dine-outvancouver.com): city restaurants offer specially-priced three course tasting menus, with sell-out parties, food-themed events, seminars, and hotel packages also available.
- *Hot Chocolate Festival* (Jan-Feb; <http://www.cityfood.com/hotchocolate/>): City-wide celebration of hot chocolate in its most creative flavours. Try dozens of different flavours throughout the month.
- *Vancouver International Wine Festival* (late February; <http://vanwinefest.ca>): the city's main wine festival event with ritzy galas, wine dinners and crowd-pleasing grand tastings.
- *BC Distilled* (April; <http://bccdistilled.ca>): one-day celebration of B.C.'s growing craft and micro-distillery industry.
- *Vancouver Craft Beer Week* (May; www.vancouvercraftbeerweek.com): showcasing B.C. brewers at events, pairing dinners and parties around the city.
- *BC Spot Prawn Festival* (May; <http://spotprawnfestival.com>): head to Fisherman's Wharf near Granville Island for displays, cooking demonstrations, and fresh-off-the-boat and super-sustainable B.C. spot prawns.
- *Vancouver Farmers' Markets* (May to October; www.eatlocal.org): regional farmers bring their produce to town at locations throughout the city. There's also a winter market from November.
- *YVR Food Fest* (August; www.yvrfoodfest.com): popular food trucks and cart festival with pop-up cocktail and beer garden, live music and DJs.
- *Feast of Fields* (September; www.feastoffields.com): one-day showcase of the Lower Mainland's great land and vineyard bounty held at a local farm.
- *Eat! Vancouver* (early October; www.eat-vancouver.com): four-day festival of food, chefs' competitions, special dinners and great cooking.
- *UBC Apple Festival* (October; www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org): buy from a massive array of apple varieties grown around the region and bring the kids for face-painting fun and apple-pie scoffing.
- *Taste of Yaletown* (October; www.yaletowninfo.com): dine-around deals at restaurants and bars in one of Vancouver's favourite dining districts.
- *Cranberry Festival* (October; www.fortlangley.com): family-friendly arts, crafts and food fest celebrating the annual cranberry harvest.

KIDS

- *Spring Break Theatre Festival* (March; www.artsclub.com): a week of live Granville Island stage shows specially aimed at kids.

- *Playland* (April to October; www.pne.ca): the city's long-standing permanent midway – complete with rollercoasters – opens its gates from spring to early fall.
- *Vancouver International Children's Festival* (late May to June; www.childrensfestival.ca): wide-eyed kids and their families turn up at Granville Island for an extravaganza of play, storytelling and shenanigans.

SUMMER SPECIALS

- *Alcan Dragon Boat Festival* (mid-June; www.dragonboatbc.ca): summer kicks off early in False Creek with this weekend of crazed paddling enjoyed by 100,000 spectators.
- *Canada Day Celebrations* (July 1; www.canadaday.canadaplace.ca): the city's biggest celebration of the country's leading national holiday, in and around Canada Place.
- *Canada Day at Granville Island* (July 1; www.granvilleisland.com): family-friendly celebration of Canada's main national holiday.
- *Pride Parade* (early August; www.vancouverpride.ca): giant annual street party, centrepiece of the city's ever-popular Pride Week.
- *Honda Celebration of Light* fireworks competition (late July to early August; <http://hondacelebrationoflight.com>): hundreds of thousands of spectators line English Bay and Vanier Park for a three-night international competition of some of the world's biggest and best fireworks displays.
- *Abbotsford International Airshow* (mid-August; www.abbotsfordairshow.com): the region's biggest celebration of flight, complete with hundreds of airplanes and dozens of air displays.
- *The Fair at the PNE* (mid-August to early September; www.pne.ca): livestock displays, dancing dog shows, a fairground, an incredible array of deep-fried fairground food, home and garden events, and live music and cultural shows (featuring big-name performers such as Culture Club and the Monkees), are just part of the action at this ever-popular annual fair.

GARDEN

- *Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival* (April; www.vcbf.ca): celebration of the city's 36,000 flowering cherry trees with performance, music and art events.
- *Penjing Festival* (early May; www.vancouverchinesegarden.com): celebrating China's "silent poems", a 2000-year-old art form meaning "potted landscape" at the city's leading Chinese garden attraction.
- *Enchanted Evenings at Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden* (July to September; www.vancouverchinesegarden.com): live music performed al fresco at the city's classical Chinese garden.

HALLOWEEN

- *Stanley Park Ghost Train* (October; www.vancouverparks.ca): kid-friendly train trundling through a spooky landscape in Vancouver's biggest park.

- *Parade of the Lost Souls* (late October; www.dustyflowerpotcaba-ret.com): nighttime street parade of costumed Halloween fans.
- *Fright Nights at the PNE* (mid-October to October 31; www.pne.ca): scary haunted houses, frightening exhibits and rides take over all of Playland.

OKTOBERFEST

- *Harvest Haus* (late September-early October; www.harvesthaus.com): feast on sausages, sauerkraut, *flammkuchen*, and a full range of German beers, ciders and spirits to the sound of oompah bands in the huge hall at Queen Elizabeth Plaza.
- *Vancouver Alpen Club* (late Sep- October; www.vancouveralpen-club.ca): The Oktoberfest destination of the city since 1935, serving traditional food and beer with live music and DJs.

CHRISTMAS

- Vancouver Christmas Market (late November to Christmas Eve; www.vancouverchristmasmarket.com): German-inspired outdoor Yuletide market, held daily next to Jack Poole Plaza at Canada Place.
- Heritage Christmas at Burnaby Village Museum (from late November; www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca): celebrate the traditions of Christmas at this popular outdoor history museum.
- Rogers Santa Claus Parade (early December; www.rogerssantaclaus-parade.com): huge, family-friendly annual street celebration of Yuletide cheer – complete with the jolly red man himself.
- Peak of Christmas at Grouse Mountain (November to December; www.grousemountain.com): smorgasbord of Christmas events, ranging from wandering reindeer and sleigh rides to snowshoeing through twinkling lights around Blue Grouse Lake and exploring Santa's workshop.
- Christmas at Canada Place (December; www.christmas.canadaplace.ca): carollers, animated window displays and the great man himself bring Christmas to life on the Vancouver waterfront.
- Bright Nights in Stanley Park (December; <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/bright-nights-train.aspx>): sparkling charity fundraising Christmas light display in the city's giant downtown park with a festive train, live performers and three million twinkling lights.
- Carol Ships Parade of Lights (December; www.carolships.org): more than 50 Vancouver boats decorate themselves with twinkling lights and parade around the waterfront, accompanied by live or pre-recorded Christmas carols.
- Festival of Lights (December to early January; www.vandus-engarden.org): one of the city's favourite gardens is decked with over one million fairy lights every Christmas. Enjoy live performances, holiday treats and dancing light shows.
- Canyon Lights (late Nov to January; www.capbridge.com): the forest and parkland around Capilano Suspension Bridge Park gain a festive

sparkle with thousands of twinkling Christmas lights. Also featuring the world's tallest Christmas tree (153 feet!), live music and gingerbread decorating.

WINTER SPECIALS

- 24 Hours of Winter at Grouse Mountain (mid-February; www.grouse-mountain.com): for one night only, Vancouver's popular ski resort stays open for 24 hours of floodlit skiing, snowboarding and snowy shenanigans.
- Winterruption (late February; www.winterruption.com): Granville Island chases away the winter blues with a warming roster of live music, theatre and family-friendly events.
- *Eastside Culture Crawl* (mid-November; www.eastsideculturecrawl.com): East Vancouver artists open their studios and stage impromptu events for art-loving visitors.
- *Winter Solstice Lantern Procession* (December 21; www.secretlantern.org): four Vancouver neighbourhoods join together with their own mini lantern parades to welcome the darkest night of the year.
- *Winter Solstice Lantern Festival at Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden* (December 21; www.vancouverchinesegarden.com): Chinese lantern parade welcomes the middle of winter.

DANCE

The city's dance scene is as eclectic as its cultural makeup, and ranges from traditional Japanese and Chinese performance to classical ballet and edgy contemporary.

There are over 30 professional dance companies and many more independent choreographers in the Vancouver area. The Dance Centre (www.thedancecentre.ca) is the main resource in the province and its range of activities is unparalleled in Canada, including presentation of programs and events for the public; provision of information and support for professional dance artists; and operation of Western Canada's flagship dance facility, which houses performances, classes, workshops and other activities throughout the year.

Story idea:

Profile Vancouver's dance scene for visitors, including information on The Dance Centre, annual events and local dancers. Consider interviewing local dancers and choreographers. Time your visit for one of the city's popular dance festivals.

LITERARY

Vancouver is a literary hotspot. More than 1,500 authors live in the B.C. region and the province boasts the highest number of book readers in Canada. As a centre of the publishing industry, the region produces about 250 new books every year.

VANCOUVER'S FAMOUS WRITERS

Vancouverite Douglas Coupland topped North American bestseller lists (and coined the moniker of a generation) with *Generation X* and popular follow-ups like *J-Pod* and *Girlfriend in a Coma* – he even produced his own quirky Vancouver “guidebook” called *City of Glass*.

William Gibson (*Neuromancer*) still has the science fiction market talking and Michael Turner is considered one of Canada's most original and versatile writers – his *Hard Core Logo* has been adapted to radio, stage and film. Timothy Taylor has garnered local, national and international plaudits for his literary output, most notably the novel *Stanley Park*.

The city also has a rich contemporary non-fiction side, with local authors James Mackinnon and Charles Montgomery leading the pack and winning national and international awards.

FIVE HOT PICKS: FICTION

- *Stanley Park* by Timothy Taylor, relating modern-day Vancouver through a story that mixes the life of a local chef with the park's dark secrets.
- *Generation X* by Douglas Coupland, the book that labelled a generation, is the satirical story of three underemployed and overeducated young refugees from yuppie wannabeism.
- *The Jade Peony* by Wayson Choy, a searing portrayal of growing up in a Vancouver Chinese immigrant family in the 1930s.
- *The Vancouver Stories*, an evocative series of shorts on the city by, among others, Douglas Coupland, Alice Munro, Ethel Wilson, Malcolm Lowry, William Gibson and Timothy Taylor.
- *Runaway: Diary of a Street Kid* by Evelyn Lau, an honour student when she ran away from home for a life of prostitution at the age of 14. Lau's personal experience became the basis for this novel of life on the streets.

FIVE HOT PICKS: NON-FICTION

- *History of Metropolitan Vancouver* by Chuck Davis, a seminal, highly evocative guide to the emergence and development of the city.
- *Greenpeace: the Inside Story* by Rex Wexler, relating the history of the environmental movement from its start in Vancouver's Kitsilano neighbourhood.
- *City of Glass* by Douglas Coupland, a colourful and quirky homage to Vancouver from one of the city's most famous living writers.
- *Wreck Beach* by Carellin Brooks, uncovering the history of the city's infamous naturist beach.
- *From Naked Ape to Super Species: A Personal Perspective on Humanity and the Global Eco-crisis* by David Suzuki, a state-of-the-environment plea from the famed local ecologist.

Story idea:

Buy a copy of Douglas Coupland's quirky City of Glass, then visit the sites he mentions. A celebrated visual artist, Coupland has also created art installations around the city: the Digital Orca next to the Convention Centre, the Terry Fox Memorial in front of BC Place Stadium and Golden Tree at Marine Drive and Cambie. Consider trying to get a comment or two from the West Vancouver-based Coupland for your story – following him on Twitter (@DougCoupland) is a good way to start.

MUSIC

Vancouver has a strong musical tradition based on decades of home-grown performers, great concert venues and a pitch-perfect – and surprisingly diverse – array of festivals. Sarah McLachlan, Michael Bublé, Dan Mangan and Bif Naked call the city home, while Diana Krall hails from across the water on Vancouver Island and has a home in West Vancouver with husband Elvis Costello.

Among the city's leading live venues are the Commodore Ballroom (www.thecommodoreballroom.com), specializing in rock and new bands; Orpheum Theatre, home to the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (www.vancouver-symphony.ca); and the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, home to the Vancouver Opera (www.vancouveropera.ca) during its October to April season.

If you miss your favourite performer, it's well worth checking out one of Vancouver's great music festivals. These range from the giant summertime Vancouver International Jazz Festival (www.coastaljazz.ca), combining free and ticketed live performances around the city; the weekend Vancouver Folk Music Festival (www.thefestival.bc.ca) at Jericho Beach; the one day free Khatsalano festival (www.khatsahlano.com) and MusicFest Vancouver (www.musicfestvancouver.ca), a colourful multi-show celebration of everything from world to classical and jazz.

Story idea:

Interview local musicians and get the lowdown on the Vancouver live scene. Ask them for their tips on what to see and where to go...then follow up with a visit or three to some great local venues, both large and small. Add in visits to some of the city's great independent record stores and you'll have a fun, insider story on Vancouver for travelling music fans.

THEATRE

Live theatre is one of Vancouver's most popular cultural attractions. The city has more than 30 professional troupes, several major theatre festivals and more than 20 performance venues. Granville Island is a hotbed of theatre activity, with several theatres. The Arts Club Theatre Company (www.artsclub.com) performs here on the Granville Island Stage as well as its Stanley Theatre on South Granville. For slightly edgier fare, check out the Firehall Arts Centre (www.firehallartscentre.ca).

Vancouver also hosts several annual theatre events. Theatre Under the Stars (www.tuts.ca) offers al fresco summer romps through a couple of popular musicals at Stanley Park's Malkin Bowl, while the Vancouver Fringe Festival (www.vancouverfringe.com) and Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival (www.bardonthebeach.org) are two of the city's biggest annual live theatre events. The former showcases eclectic comic, dramatic and musical short plays from around the world, while the latter offers a roster of Shakespeare plays every year in a dramatic tented venue in Vanier Park.

Regular priced tickets as well as day-of-performance, half-priced tickets for shows across the city are available from Tickets Tonight (www.ticketstonight.ca), which has a desk inside Tourism Vancouver's downtown Visitor Centre.

Extra!

Opened in 1927, the grand Orpheum Theatre was once part of a large chain of vaudeville venues centered on Chicago. Stars who have hit the stage here over the years include Bob Hope, Shirley MacLaine and B.B. King. Check out the Walk of Fame outside the theatre: a series of sidewalk plaques honouring members of the B.C. Hall of Fame, from Randy Bachman to Diana Krall.

VISUAL ARTS

Vancouver is an artsy city ripe for exploration with hundreds of public, private and artist-run galleries available to enjoy. The South Granville area is an easily explored strip of private galleries and is just a short walk from Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com), home to dozens of artisan workshops and studio spaces. Granville Island is also the site of Emily Carr University of Art + Design (www.ecuad.ca), which regularly stages free exhibitions of the work of its emerging artists.

The Vancouver Art Gallery (www.vanartgallery.bc.ca) is the city's leading art space, combining blockbuster visiting exhibitions with shows focusing on regional artists and schools. Photography is a particular specialty among West Coast artists and the VAG showcases local photographers on a regular basis. It also curates a free outdoor art space next to the Shangri-La Hotel, staging challenging contemporary works that add to the city's streetscape.

Vancouver is studded with public art, ranging from Douglas Coupland's *Digital Orca* outside the Convention Centre building to the evocative silver boat shed on stilts on the Coal Harbour seawall and Marcus Bowcott's *Trans Am Totem* which stacks five scrap cars on a cedar tree at the cross of Quebec and Melross. For more on the city's public art program, visit www.vancouver.ca/publicart_net and check out the latest works in the Vancouver Biennale (www.vancouverbiennale.com).

Story idea:

Hit the city's Eastside Culture Crawl (www.eastsideculturecrawl.com), a wildly popular three-day November event where local artists open their studios and

showcase their works. Interview artists and Vancouverites during the event and include recommendations for “artsy places” to eat and drink along the way.

ABORIGINAL CULTURE IN VANCOUVER

Vancouver’s Aboriginal population is extremely diverse and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from all across Canada. Metro Vancouver has the third largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada with 52,375 people. There are three local First Nations in Vancouver: the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh. These three are part of a larger cultural group called the Coast Salish. The City of Vancouver is on the traditional territories of these three First Nations who have a special spiritual, cultural, and economic connection to this land that goes back thousands of years. This relationship was celebrated at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games when local Indigenous peoples were recognized as official hosting partners for the first time in Olympic history. When visiting Vancouver, there are several ways to immerse yourself in the region’s rich Aboriginal heritage and traditions:

- The Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art houses a permanent collection of work by Bill Reid (one of Canada’s most celebrated Aboriginal artists) as well as a collection of art created by a new generation of First Nations artists along the Northwest Coast (www.billreidgallery.ca).
- The BC Sports Hall of Fame at BC Place Stadium has a dedicated Aboriginal Sports Gallery. The only gallery of its kind in Canada, it celebrates the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made to the province’s sporting history (www.bcsportshalloffame.com).
- The UBC Museum of Anthropology features an extensive collection of First Nations artefacts, including towering totem poles and Bill Reid’s acclaimed *The Raven and the First Men* sculpture (www.moa.ubc.ca).
- Takaya Tours in North Vancouver takes visitors out for a paddle through Indian Arm in 13-metre cedar canoes. Coast Salish guides sing traditional songs, tell stories and point out ancient village sites. They also run a forest walk through Stanley Park. Note that Takaya Tours only operates during summer months (www.takayatours.com).
- Coastal Peoples Fine Arts Gallery and Inuit Gallery are private galleries where visitors can peruse and purchase top-quality First Nations art works. Both galleries are recognized for showcasing the work of a new generation of talented Aboriginal artists who push the boundaries of their ancestral art forms (www.coastalpeoples.com; www.inuit.com).
- Skwachays Lodge (pronounced skwach-eyes) is a unique business: part Aboriginal art gallery, part boutique hotel and part social enterprise, with 18 rooms individually decorated by First Nations artists working alongside interior designers (www.skwachays.com).
- Hobiye is celebrated wherever Nisga’a people live, paying homage to the waxing crescent moon, and takes place during the latter part of winter each year. The Nisga’a of Ts’amiks (Vancouver), hosts this celebration each year and invites dance groups from other Nations to celebrate with them (<http://www.tsamiks.com/hoobyee-2016.html>).

- The Talking Stick Festival features performance and art by some of the region's best emerging and established Indigenous artists (<http://fullcircle.ca/tsf-overview>).
- Coastal First Nations Dance Festival at the Museum of Anthropology showcases the diverse and rich cultural traditions practiced by a selection of some of the best artists from coastal British Columbia and the Yukon, as well as national and international guest artists. Throughout the festival, the Museum's Great Hall is transformed into a celebration of Indigenous cultures and dance traditions.
- Whey-ah-Wichen Canoe Festival is a fun day of traditional war canoe races hosted by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation in North Vancouver
- Aboriginal Tourism BC's website offers an excellent introduction to B.C.'s First Nations, suggesting various Aboriginal itineraries throughout the province. It also lists restaurants, attractions and accommodations for visitors seeking an authentic local Aboriginal experience (www.aboriginalbc.com).

HOLLYWOOD NORTH

Vancouver is the fourth-largest foreign film and production centre in N America. North Shore Studios - previously Lionsgate Studios - and Vancouver Film Studios, are amongst the two largest special effects stages in Canada. VFS is one of the largest production facilities outside of Los Angeles, and Bridge Studios in Burnaby (part of Metro Vancouver) has one of the largest special effects stages in North America. Mammoth Studios, a subsidiary of North Shore studios, holds on of the largest film stages in the world at 123,883 square feet (11,509.1 square meters). Total direct and indirect full time equivalent jobs generated by film and TV production in B.C. are estimated at over 36,000 and Vancouver plays host to a steady stream of TV and movie producers and, by extension, movie stars.

Animation and digital film production thrive here, too (*Life of Pi*, *District 9*, *Sherlock Holmes* and *Cloud Atlas* are among the major blockbusters whose digital effects were completed in Vancouver). The bulk of the productions are based in Metro Vancouver, the heart of "Hollywood North".

The city has a rich "Hollywood talent factory" available for film and television production, both behind and in front of the camera. Industry players who grew up or were trained in the region include Michael J. Fox, Seth Rogan, Ryan Reynolds and Kevin Smith. In fact, Smith trained at the renowned Vancouver Film School (www.vfs.com), one of North America's most successful talent pools for the North American movie industry. Vancouver is also a hotbed of animation, post-production and movie special effects studios and is at the forefront of software and gaming development in North America.

ABC, NBC, CBS, Disney, Polygram, Trimark, Showtime, Viacom, Universal, Warner Brothers and 20th Century Fox are among the leading companies to have based productions in the region. TV shows that have used the city as a backdrop – usually disguising it as the U.S. – include *Smallville*, *Stargate SG-1*, *The X-Files* and *Alcatraz*.

Extra!

Recent movies shot in and around Vancouver include the Fifty Shades trilogy, Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events, Deadpool, The Arrow and The Flash, along with classic favourites like Night at the Museum, Juno, Fantastic Four, Mission Impossible 4 and Superman: Man of Steel. In addition, the Twilight saga was mostly filmed here, luring legions of moon-eyed fans to sites across the region.

Recognising its growing importance, provincial and municipal governments started to make Vancouver an attractive production proposition in the 1970s. The province established the B.C. Film Commission to clear a path between Hollywood and Vancouver, establishing an office in the world centre of movie-making and creating a package of services to assist U.S. studios. This became Creative BC in 2013 (www.creativebc.com). For its part, the City of Vancouver operates a film services department to assist urban location shoots with traffic control, parking permits and preferred site access.

Story idea

Consider a story on Vancouver film locations for visiting TV and movie fans. Contact Creative BC for assistance, and then cover the most interesting sites for your readers. Interview a couple of local actors who have appeared in blockbuster Hollywood North movies or TV shows and coordinate your visit to catch a film shoot on one of the city's streets. Add an exciting edge to your story by becoming an extra in a production yourself.

CELEBRITY SPOTTING

Before stepping out for a night on the town in Vancouver, consult your hotel concierge, wait staff or friendly bartender. These keen observers of what's hip and happening are your best bet for discovering where the beautiful people are hanging out. Among the city's most popular celebrity hotspots (and the glitterati who have frequented them) are:

Hotels

- Absolute Spa at the Century Plaza Hotel (www.absolutespa.com): Sarah Michelle Gellar, Christina Aguilera, Courtney Cox, Courtney Love, Gwyneth Paltrow, Sharon Stone, Uma Thurman, Ethan Hawke, Jessica Alba, Will Ferrell
- Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver (www.fourseasons.com/vancouver): Hilary Swank, Al Pacino, Robin Williams, Ashton Kutcher
- Opus Hotel and Opus Bar (www.opushotel.com): Justin Timberlake, REM, The Rock, Christian Slater, Tara Reid, Reese Witherspoon
- Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel (www.vancouver.panpacific.com): Brad Pitt, Jack Nicholson, 50 Cent, Marlon and Shawn Wayans, Tim Robbins, Uma Thurman

- The Sutton Place Hotel and Gerard Lounge (www.suttonplace.com): Ben Affleck, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Kim Cattrall, Robert Pattinson, Dakota Fanning
- Shangri-La Hotel is popular for its underground car park and secluded entrance. George Cloony and Tom Cruise have both stayed here.
- Wedgewood Hotel and Bacchus Lounge (www.wedgewoodhotel.com): REM, Goldie Hawn, Kurt Russell, Eddie Vedder, Ben Affleck, Harrison Ford

Restaurants & Bars

- Bao Bei (<http://bao-bei.ca>): Blake Lively (one of her favourite restaurants in Vancouver).
- Blue Water Café (www.bluewatercafe.net): Alicia Silverstone, Matthew Lillard, Jamie Lee Curtis, Uma Thurman, Ben Stiller
- Cin Cin (www.cincin.net): Ben Affleck, Naomi Watts, Heath Ledger, Laura Dern, Michael Stipe, Macy Gray, Robin Williams, Leslie Nielsen, Janet Jackson, Justin Timberlake, Elisha Cuthbert
- Gotham Steakhouse (www.gothamsteakhouse.com): The Rock, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Uma Thurman, Halle Berry
- Tojo's (www.tojos.com): William Shatner, Eddie Murphy, Morgan Freeman, Robin Williams
- Cioppino's Mediterranean Grill & Enoteca (www.cioppinos.wordpress.com): Drake, Jennifer Aniston, Bill Clinton

CELEBRITY QUOTES ON VANCOUVER

"I've never seen so much coffee in all my life. The whole town is on a caffeine jag, and still nothing gets done any faster." –*Bette Midler, during a Vancouver concert performance*

"It's an amazing city. It's just got a great vibe to it. There's an energy there that I'm really enjoying a great deal." –*Michael Stipe, REM*

"Clean...with lots of coffee." –*Charlize Theron, while filming Reindeer Games*

"It's one of the places that has that perfect, magical combination of mountains and ocean. And tons of trees. It's a vibrant place to be. And the people are really nice. And they love to be outside. They don't take a beautiful day for granted. They celebrate how beautiful it is. I'm always happy to go to Canada in general, but especially Vancouver." –*Jennifer Garner, interviewed in American Way magazine*

"I love Vancouver. Happy to report Vancouver is still beautiful." –*Ricky Gervais Tweeting on a recent visit.*

"I like Vancouver – the relationship to the water, the calmness of the people. I like that there's less fear there." –*Wesley Snipes, when asked about his favourite place by the New York Post*

Extra!

Celebs with homes in Vancouver are alleged to include Bryan Adams, Goldie Hawn, Gillian Anderson, Jean-Claude Van Damme and Terence Stamp.

CELEBRITY FUN FACTS

- Rudyard Kipling visited Vancouver three times, the first in 1892, and even bought land here.
- When Fred Karno's British entertainment troupe began a week-long engagement in the city in 1911, one of the performers was 22-year-old Charlie Chaplin.
- One night, following a backstage party at the city's Orpheum Theatre, film star Gary Cooper hitched a ride back to the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver on a passing street-cleaning machine.
- Actress Yvonne de Carlo, a movie star of the 1960s (and the original Lily Munster on *The Munsters*), was once an usher at the Orpheum Theatre.
- In 1923, the first U.S. president to visit Canada was Warren Harding, who chose Vancouver as the place to touch down. 50,000 people turned out to hear him speak in Stanley Park.
- Bing Crosby visited the city often but was once refused a room at the Hotel Vancouver when he walked in very informally dressed and with a few days' growth of beard – the bemused reservation clerk didn't recognize him.
- Katharine Hepburn periodically rented the penthouse of the low-rise Rossell Suites, in the city's West End area. It's still available today.
- Howard Hughes and Errol Flynn both stayed at the Westin Bayshore Resort and Marina – although not at the same time. Both caused quite a stir during their stays, with the reclusive Hughes reserving an entire floor for his giant entourage.

ARCHITECTURE**MOVEMENTS & ARCHITECTS**

Following the 1886 Great Fire that destroyed nearly all of Vancouver's timber-framed buildings, the city took far more care over its architecture. From this point on, important structures were brick and stone built. But alongside the utility of better construction, Vancouver also began to follow colonial building fashions and, with time, to pioneer its own architectural movements.

In the early years of the twentieth century, a young architect from England called Francis Rattenbury designed many of B.C.'s key buildings. In Victoria, these included the grand Empress Hotel and Parliament Buildings while in Vancouver, he was responsible for the Vancouver Art Gallery building (originally a courthouse), the first Hotel Vancouver and Roedde House (now a museum in the West End).

Alongside Rattenbury, Samuel Maclure was even more prolific here, designing many of the English-inspired mansions that well-to-do Vancouverites of the time called home. The Shaughnessy Heights area of the city features many of these attractive houses and the neighbourhood is an ideal spot for a self-directed architectural walking tour.

While smaller Maclure houses in the arts and crafts-inspired Craftsman approach (many of them still preserved in Kitsilano) were also popular, by the 1950s the modernist movement had taken hold. West Vancouver is home to many of these large, dramatic residences, fusing B.C. cedar and local rock with the clean lines of the leading design movement of the time. By the 1960s, this had given way to a less-appreciated local school: the Vancouver Special is a low-gabled, box-like home that became a housing staple for three decades. Originally dismissed, it is slowing being recognised and appreciated.

Extra!

Artist Ken Lum unveiled "Vancouver Especially" in Chinatown's Union Street in February 2015. This scaled-down model of the "Vancouver Special" is a commentary on current real estate, wealth, and building style in Vancouver.

Vancouver's most famous architectural son was Arthur Erickson, who combined the utility and functionalism of concrete and glass with local materials and natural forms, specializing in a type of post and beam design that can be seen on prominent display at his UBC Museum of Anthropology building. Keep your eyes peeled for other Erickson buildings around the city, including the Law Courts building and the starkly functional MacMillan Bloedel Building at Georgia and Thurlow Streets. The most recent is the Trump International Hotel & Tower, which opens in early 2017.

Extra!

The Guinness family built the Lions Gate Bridge in 1938. The B.C. government later purchased the majestic, green-painted span but, in 1986, the Guinness family donated money to decoratively light the bridge in the evenings. It's now one of the region's most iconic, picture postcard landmarks.

SUSTAINABILITY, LIVABILITY AND VANCOUVERISM

In recent years, Vancouver has pioneered a type of building design that not only incorporates the look of nature but also harmonizes with it in a sustainable way. The region is a hotbed of green building design and few structures are built that don't meet and exceed ambitious sustainability goals. Check out the Convention Centre expansion and its grass roof, for example, or the LEED-platinum certified Olympic Village, a product of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, now often cited as the world's greenest neighbourhood. In 2016, a pair of beavers were seen in the man-made wetlands, gnawing on twigs and industriously building a dam.

Vancouver has also led the way with a form of urban planning that places livability at the centre. Distinct from almost all major cities in North America, the city's urban plan involves mixed use buildings – typically tall, densely-populated urban towers with shops at their base – that preserve access for the locals to the waterfront and to the spectacular natural views that define the city's setting. In recent years, this approach to planning has been termed "Vancouverism."

TOP TEN BUILDINGS

As you wander the city, look out for these iconic Vancouver buildings:

- Vancouver Public Library
- BC Place Stadium
- Canada Place
- Vancouver Convention Centre West Building
- UBC Museum of Anthropology
- Marine Building
- Dominion Building
- Vancouver Law Courts
- Science World
- Bloedel Floral Conservatory

Story idea!

Take a building-focused tour of one of Vancouver's neighbourhoods with the Architectural Institute of B.C. (www.aibc.ca). See their website for a full list of available tours, which typically run during the summer months.

SPORTS AND OUTDOORS

Metro Vancouver is an outdoor paradise for the active-minded, with hundreds of accessible options ranging from snowshoeing to scuba diving, kayaking to rock climbing, hiking to biking and skiing to boating. Alternatively, if you prefer to sit around and watch, the city is also an ideal destination for travelling spectators. There's an NHL hockey team, as well as professional football, soccer and baseball teams here.

This wealth of outdoor attractions and sports venues is one of the reasons Vancouver was selected as host city for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The event's spectacular opening and closing ceremonies were staged at downtown's landmark BC Place Stadium, which reopened in 2011 after a giant renovation that transformed it into one of Canada's leading, state-of-the-art sports venues.

In 2015, Vancouver got back on the global sporting map by hosting the FIFA Women World's Cup. In 2016, the city hosted World Rugby Sevens and the America's Masters Games. In November 2017, for the first time in Canada, the Nike Vancouver Showcase comes to town featuring eight men's and eight women's NCAA Division 1 basketball teams, who will compete in an annual tournament at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

SUMMER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

KAYAKING

Metro Vancouver's two most popular paddling destinations could hardly be more different. The placid waters of False Creek enjoy the urban backdrop of Yaletown's glass towers and the bustling shoreline of Granville Island, while the North Shore's nature-hugging Deep Cove area is the launch point for Indian Arm, a tree-lined, finger-shaped fjord that bends northwards for 30 kilometres (19 miles) into the heart of the mountains. Connect with local kayak rental and tour operators including Ecomarine Ocean Kayak Centre (www.ecomarine.com) and Deep Cove Canoe and Kayak Centre (www.deepcovekayak.com) for the low-down on each paddle-perfect spot. Or add in a cultural component and head out with First Nations canoe and kayak operators Takaya Tours (<http://takaya-tours.com/tours/>).

Story idea

Consider an urban kayaking story covering a paddle around busy False Creek. Your story could include stops at Vanier Park, Yaletown, Science World and the Olympic Village neighbourhood. You could end your voyage at Granville Island – an ideal spot for lunch – overlooking the art deco arch of the Burrard Street Bridge. Ecomarine Ocean Kayak (www.ecomarine.com) has a rental office on the island. Shoot some video while you're on the water to give your readers a real taste of the area.

HIKING

Metro Vancouver offers a cornucopia of idyllic hiking opportunities. Popular multi-trail trekking spots include Stanley Park and UBC's Pacific Spirit Regional Park, as well as the North Shore's Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve, complete with 50 kilometres (31 miles) of paved and gravel logging trails that also attract cyclists and inline skaters. The region's most popular hiking route is the Grouse Grind (www.grousemountain.com), a steep 2.9-kilometre (1.8 mile) uphill trek through the forest. It can take up to two hours, but you can relax with a gondola ride back down for \$10.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Not all of the trails carved through the region's rainforest are designed for hikers. Meandering mountain biking tracks have been cut on the backside of ski areas at Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com) and Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) and through the heavily forested woods of Pacific Spirit Park and the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve. In fact, the North Shore is home to one of Canada's most vibrant mountain bike communities, with trails and clubs across the area. Check in with any of the North Shore bike shops for up-to-date trail maps.

ROLLERBLADING

The 8.8-kilometre (5.5-mile) Stanley Park seawall is studded with trundling rollerbladers throughout the summer months – its flat, paved path circles the entire park and offers spectacular mountain, waterfront and forest vistas with plenty of spots to stop and take a breather. More adventurous rollerbladers are often drawn to North Vancouver's Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve, where the towering trees provide a spectacular backdrop for a nature-bound spin. In-line skates (as well as bikes) can be rented at operators including Bayshore Rentals (www.bayshorebikerentals.ca).

SWIMMING

The Vancouver Park Board (www.vancouverparks.ca) operates nine indoor pools and seven outdoor pools, as well as employing lifeguards throughout the summer months on the city's main beaches. In the West End, the Vancouver Aquatic Centre features an indoor, Olympic-size pool, weight room, sauna and whirlpool. In the summer, Kitsilano Pool, off Cornwall Avenue, and the Second Beach Pool in Stanley Park offer the joys of swimming outdoors in pools that are popular with families.

BEACHES

Among Vancouver's best summertime haunts, Kitsilano Beach is the most popular spot for catching the rays. It attracts families, locals and visitors with its wide sandy expanse and large saltwater swimming pool. English Bay beach, at the intersection of Denman and Davie Streets is a busy stretch for sunbathers, volleyball players and resting rollerbladers. For the city's best sunset, head to Stanley Park's Third Beach, where you can lean against a log and watch the sky blush through its end-of-day pyrotechnics.

Story idea:

Consider a summertime story on Vancouver's beaches for visitors, assessing swimming and family-friendly qualities as well as natural surroundings and additional facilities like the swimming pool at Kits Beach. You could also suggest dining options near each beach and include comments from locals on their favourite sandy spots for adults, families, sunsets and picnics. Cover popular spots like Kitsilano Beach and English Bay beach as well less-crowded areas like Spanish Banks. Spice things up by including Wreck Beach, the city's only naturist option.

SCUBA

Vancouver's beauty also extends below the ocean's surface. With some of the region's best cold-water diving between Vancouver Island and the mainland, you can expect to spot marine species like wolf eels and large Pacific octopus, as well as a brilliant red coral found few other places in the world. Whytecliff Park near Horseshoe Bay, Porteau Cove and Britannia Beach are popular diving sites. (<http://vancouverscubadivingschool.ca>)

FISHING

It's no surprise that salmon fishing is a big attraction for visiting anglers. Using the latest electronic fish finding equipment to give guests the best chance of a catch, Bites-On Salmon Charters (www.bites-on.com) offers fully-guided fishing adventures departing from downtown and heading out to English Bay, Howe Sound and the Strait of Georgia. In the spring, the company also offers a spectacular nine-hour charter through the Gulf Islands to fish for Chinook salmon. Other charter companies operating in the region include Sewell's Marina (www.sewellsmarina.com) and STS Guiding Service (www.fishingvancouver.com).

BOATING

With its spectacular waterfront location, boating around the Vancouver region is a highly popular activity for visitors. Whether it's a sunset dinner cruise around the Stanley Park coastline, a narrated harbour cruise around the busy waterfront, a mini-tour on a water taxi around False Creek or a fishing or sightseeing trek aboard a charter, the city is a marine-lovers' paradise. Operators include Harbour Cruises (www.boatcruises.com), and Accent Cruises (www.accentcruises.ca), while local water taxis are run by Aquabus Ferries (www.theaquabus.com) and False Creek Ferries (www.granvilleislandferries.bc.ca).

WINDSURFING, KITEBOARDING & PADDLEBOARDING

Vancouver is popular among the windsurfing fraternity and it's also a great spot to try this activity for the first time. Jericho Beach is a hotspot for those renting equipment and taking beginner lessons. For those who want the challenge of high-wind sailing, Squamish – an hour's drive north of the city – offers some of Canada's best windsurfing conditions. In summer, strong thermal winds blow down the valley and create ideal windsurfing and kiteboarding conditions. The Squamish Windsports Society (www.squamishwindsports.com) manages the site and charges a daily user's fee. Adventurous visitors can also rent and take lessons in kiteboarding and paddleboarding.

ROCK CLIMBING

Ringed by mountains, Vancouver is an ideal destination for rock climbers who don't want to stray too far from the city. Local mountains offer dozens of options for climbers of all levels, while a one-hour drive along the Sea-to-Sky Highway brings you to one of Western Canada's most popular climbing destinations. The Squamish Chief is an experienced rock climber's dream with boundless routes to scale on its beautiful granite face. For those less experienced, group and private lessons, indoor climbing walls and guided climbing tours are available around the region.

HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES

One of the best ways to take in the spectacular natural surroundings of Stanley Park is to hop on a gently paced horse-drawn carriage ride around its wide, tree-lined roads. Stanley Park Horse-Drawn Tours (www.stanleypark.com) offers one-hour narrated carriage tours through the park for nature-loving visitors throughout the summer.

Story idea:

Consider a story on the area's winter resorts for summertime visitors. Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com) and Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) are each renowned for their winter activities, but they are also great spots for summer visitors. Your story could offer a first-hand review of summer activities, ranging from alpine hikes and mountain biking to wildlife watching and lumberjack shows.

WINTER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

SKIING, NIGHT SKIING AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Snow seldom falls in the city, yet Vancouverites enjoy some of North America's best downhill and cross-country ski facilities thanks to the mountains surrounding them. The twinkling lights of the neighbouring ski slopes – at Cypress Mountain, Grouse Mountain and Mount Seymour – attract the city's residents and tourists alike, urging them to drop everything and hit the powder 30 minutes from downtown.

Venue for the 2010 Olympic snowboarding and freestyle skiing events, Cypress (www.cypressmountain.com) has the largest vertical drop of all the city mountains, and a superb track-set for cross-country skiing. Grouse (www.grousemountain.com) features tremendous summit views and easy access, while Mount Seymour (www.mountseymour.com) specializes in lessons for first-timers and is popular with families. Each facility also offers evening skiing options where many of its runs are floodlit and include twinkling cityscape vistas.

Just over 90 minutes north of the city along the stunning Sea to Sky Highway are the twin internationally renowned ski mountains of Whistler and Blackcomb (www.whistlerblackcomb.com), which attract skiers from all over the world for

downhill, cross-country and helicopter skiing. Whistler was the “host mountain” for several outdoor events during the 2010 Winter Olympics.

SNOWBOARDING

Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) upgraded many of its facilities for the 2010 Winter Olympics and it's a popular snowboarding destination for boarders of all abilities. Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com) also offers great snowboarding options, as well as private lessons and schools for those trying it out for the first time. Rentals are also available at Mount Seymour (www.mountseymour.com), where a wide range of lessons for boarders is on offer.

SNOWSHOEING

Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com), Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) and Mount Seymour (www.mountseymour.com) all offer snowshoeing opportunities less than a half-hour drive from the city. Grouse offers equipment rentals and guided tours on its forested snowshoe trails as well as night-time snowshoe/fondue packages. New for 2015, Grouse Mountain's Light Walk offers beautiful snowshoe trails around Blue Grouse Lake lit by dazzling light installations. Cypress also has marked trails for snowshoers, as well as day and night-time guided tours.

Story idea

Consider a story on experiencing Vancouver's ski resorts at night. You could focus on what visitors can do at Grouse, Seymour and Cypress in the evening, ranging from skiing and snowboarding on floodlit runs to guided snowshoes treks through the forest and lighted sleigh rides and ice skating activities. Your story could also review the drinking and dining options available for evening visitors – including Grouse's fine dining, Cypress' lodge and Seymour's laid-back pub.

SKATING

Vancouverites love to ice-skate and there are eight indoor public rinks across the city, each administered by the Vancouver Park Board (www.vancouverparks.ca). These include the family-friendly community centres in Kerrisdale, Kitsilano and the West End, each offering lessons to skaters of all skill levels. In addition, the Hillcrest Centre was converted to a legacy facility after the 2010 Olympics, delivering an NHL-sized ice rink to the community. For an alternative approach, check out Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com), which runs a charming little kid-friendly outdoor rink during the winter season. And don't miss the free winter outdoor rink at downtown's Robson Square.

TUBING

One of the most popular trends in winter activities for families is snow tubing and you can try it out on Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) and Mount Seymour (www.mountseymour.com). Cypress offers some heart-pumping, tree-flanked tracks for those who like to speed through the snow, while Seymour attracts snowy speed demons of all ages – plus they offer an additional Toboggan Park for those who bring their own equipment.

ALL-SEASON PURSUITS

GOLF

Vancouver's peak golf season runs from April to October but many of the region's courses are also open year-round. Popular Metro Vancouver public courses (see: www.vancouverparksgolf.ca) include Langara Golf Course, a par-71 course with a clubhouse and adjoining wooded jogging trails; Fraserview Golf Course, a 225-acre site with a par-72 course overlooking the Fraser River; and McCleery Golf Course, a par-71/72 course located on the north banks of the Fraser River designed by Ted Baker. The University of British Columbia is also home to its own course, the par-72 University Golf Club (www.universitygolf.com), which offers some spectacular waterfront views.

Story idea

Contrast and compare three Vancouver golf courses for visitors, making sure you choose three with diverse attributes. Interview local golfers you meet along the way and get the low-down on what makes for a great golfing day in the region. Include a sidebar of insider tips culled from the locals.

PITCH & PUTT

You don't have to be Mike Weir to hit the greens on Vancouver's golf courses. In fact, two city facilities have been attracting golfers of all ages and abilities for years. At Queen Elizabeth Park's Pitch & Putt (www.vancouverparks.ca) weeping willows surround the fairways and offer jaw-dropping views over the city. Across town at Stanley Park, the popular Pitch & Putt (www.vancouverparks.ca) course is one of the park's plethora of family-friendly activities.

CYCLING

Cycling is perhaps the best way to explore Vancouver, and its moderate climate makes it possible to pedal here year-round. There are around 300 kilometres (186 miles) of dedicated bike routes crisscrossing the region and cyclists can take their bikes for free on SeaBus and SkyTrain services as well as rack-fitted transit buses. Check out the www.vancouver.ca/cycling webpage for handy resources or pick up a copy of the *Metro Vancouver Cycling Map* for routes and further information.

Popular city routes include the paved 8.8-kilometre (5.5-mile) Stanley Park seawall and the 15-kilometre (9.4-mile) seaside trek from English Bay via False Creek to the University of British Columbia – combine both for a calf-busting day out. Bikes of all sorts – from tandem to mountain – can be rented throughout the city. Companies include Bayshore Bicycles & Rollerblade Rentals (www.bayshorebikerentals.ca), Spokes Bicycle Rentals (www.spokesbicyclerentals.com) and ezeerIDERS Bike & Snowboard Rentals (www.ezeeriders.com).

MOBI BIKES

Vancouver's public bike share program, Mobi, launched in summer 2016. Offer-

ing bicycles located across the network at 150 secure, easy-to-use docking stations, Mobi offers a convenient, comfortable, flexible, and affordable way to get around. Mobi is available by purchasing a daily or monthly pass. The rates are best suited for short rides, while those looking for longer rides will find better rates at local bike rental shops. Mobi is operated by Vancouver Bike Share Inc., a division of CycleHop Canada. Download the app at iTunes or GooglePlay. (<http://mobibikes.ca>)

RUNNING

For urban fitness-lovers who want to stay within the borders of Vancouver, there is no finer place to pound the pavement than the city's picturesque Stanley Park seawall. On hot summer days, the cool shade of the Douglas fir and cedar trees in the park's interior trails provide some welcome shade. Other favourite spots for running include the University of British Columbia's Pacific Spirit Regional Park.

FLOATPLANE AND HELICOPTER RIDES

With its signature West Coast views of waterfront, mountains and dense forest, seeing Vancouver from the air is a breathtaking experience for any visitor. With one of the largest networks of floatplane routes in the world, the city offers several flighty sightseeing options for those interested in a birds-eye view of the region. "Flightseeing" excursions from the city are offered by Harbour Air Seaplanes (www.harbour-air.com) or with Helijet helicopters (www.helijet.com) on a low level flight over Lion's Gate Bridge and Stanley Park, across the Salish Sea to Nanaimo and back.

FOREST WALKS

Stanley Park is a walker's paradise in the heart of the city. One of the largest urban parks in North America, its 400 hectares (1,000 acres) of woodlands, gardens, flowers, trails, lakes, beaches and wildlife are a year-round draw. Circumnavigate the park via the seawall or take the road less travelled around Lost Lagoon or Beaver Lake. In addition, the spectacular forest trails of UBC's Pacific Spirit Regional Park offer a secluded chance to commune with nature, complete with some unrivalled ocean and mountain views. Mostly known for skiing, the region's three mountain resorts – Cypress, Grouse and Seymour – all offer excellent walking and hiking trails in the spring and summer. Varying levels and lengths are available and each mountain provides well-marked trails and walking information from their customer service centres.

WILDLIFE WATCHING

Birds: Twitchers come from all over the world to view some of the thousands of feathered visitors that flock to the region's George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary (www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com) as part of their annual trek along the Pacific coast from Mexico to Alaska. They also come to see the birds that over-winter at the sanctuary, or spend their spring, summer and fall here. Among the highlights is the November arrival of up to 75,000 snow geese from Russia.

Eagles: From November to January, among the highest concentration of bald eagles in the world can be found an hour north of Vancouver along the Squamish

River, near the village of Brackendale. Thousands of eagles usually turn-up for this spectacular wildlife treat. Sunwolf (www.sunwolf.net) offers guided boat treks down the river to witness this amazing sight. Their expedition rafts give you an intimate view of the eagles as they congregate to feed on the spawning salmon.

Salmon: Visitors to North Vancouver's Capilano River Hatchery can observe one of the greatest life-cycle stories in nature. Juvenile salmon are raised on site, and you can see them before they return to the river. During the fall, returning salmon struggle up the fish ladders to spawn here.

Marine: Those who don a lifejacket and board one of the high-speed Zodiac-style Sea Safari boats at Sea Vancouver which launches from the Westin Bayshore (<http://seavancouver.com>) are typically treated to up-close views of sea birds and local seals. Visiting whales are the main attraction of the tours offered by Vancouver Whale Watch (www.vancouverwhalewatch.com) and Prince of Whales (www.princeofwhales.com) and both offer pick-ups from downtown Vancouver. The whale-watching season typically runs April/May to October.

Story idea

Consider a story profiling the region's wildlife-watching opportunities for visitors. You could check out the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary and the Capilano River Hatchery and also make time for a whale-watching boat tour with Vancouver Whale Watch.

KITE FLYING

There's no better way to spend a breezy afternoon on the Vancouver waterfront than to bring a kite and hit Vanier Park. The backdrop for your outdoor activity will be the North Shore mountains, the busy boat traffic of False Creek and passing joggers and dog walkers.

When the sun is shining, bring a picnic, or duck into one of the three nearby museums (Vancouver Museum, Maritime Museum, H.R. MacMillan Space Centre) before following the waterfront along the seawall to Granville Island.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

For the latest on Vancouver's professional sports scene, contact Tickets Tonight (www.ticketstonight.ca) or visit the booth within the Tourism Vancouver Visitor Centre. And don't miss taking in an event at BC Place – the city's landmark stadium, it's one of the world's most technologically advanced sporting venues and it has a retractable roof.

HOCKEY

The Canadian love of hockey has supported the National Hockey League's Vancouver Canucks (www.canucks.com) franchise since the mid-70s. Debate over the team, its management, staff, players and the team's variable fortunes reigns hot and heavy in the media, on the streets and in every bar each season. In the

spring of 1995, the Canucks, who play at Rogers Arena, captured the imagination of the entire province when they came within a goal of winning the coveted Stanley Cup – named after the fella who also gave his moniker to the city's favourite park. The team came close to the big prize again in 2011.

Those who can't get tickets to a Canucks game should consider checking out the Western Hockey League's Vancouver Giants (www.vancouvergiants.com), who play at the Pacific Coliseum in East Vancouver. Popular with visitors and families, games are great value – and you'll be close to the action just a few feet from the ice.

CANADIAN FOOTBALL

The BC Lions (www.bclions.com), who play in the newly refurbished BC Place Stadium, were the Canadian Football League's Grey Cup champions in 2011. The season runs from June to November and the game – which many argue is more exciting than American Football – is played with three downs and takes place on a longer and wider field than U.S. teams use. Tickets are much easier to come by than Canucks games and there's always a great family-friendly atmosphere.

SOCCER

The world's most popular game, soccer, is played professionally in the city by the Vancouver Whitecaps (www.whitecapsfc.com), who stepped up to North America's Major League Soccer franchise in 2011, moving their games to BC Place Stadium in the process.

BASEBALL

Strike, you're out! Baseball is a local tradition thanks to the Vancouver Canadians (www.canadiansbaseball.com), the city's short-season, single-A team. Enjoy a spirited Canadians game from June through September at historic Nat Bailey Stadium – it's a favourite way for Vancouverites to spend a lazy summer afternoon.

Extra!

It's hard to think of a sport that isn't pursued by Vancouverites. The city's lesser-known sports include cricket and bowling (both practiced in Stanley Park); rugby, with teams across the region operating under the eye of BC Rugby (www.bcrugby.com); and roller derby, an all-women's league that's risen to prominence in Vancouver in recent (www.terminalcityrollergirls.com). And if you want to dive into one of the most popular winter sports among Canadians, check out curling via the Vancouver Curling Club (<http://vancurl.com>).

Story: *Check out the city's alternative sports scene for visitors, including visits to some of the above and interviewing participants – and spectators – along the way.*

ANNUAL SPORTING EVENTS

Polar Bear Swim (January 1; www.vancouverparks.ca): launched in 1920, this New Year dip in the chilly waters of English Bay annually attracts around 2,000 participants – and many more spectators.

Vancouver Sun Run (April; <http://www.vancouver.sun.com/sunrun/index.html>): one of North America's biggest and most popular 10km road races attracts more than 50,000 runners, walkers and wheelchair racers.

BMO Vancouver Marathon (early May; www.bmovanmarathon.ca): the city's annual road race for serious runners.

Cloverdale Rodeo and Country Fair (mid-May; www.cloverdalerodeo.com): cowboy-themed events from wagon races to bucking broncos.

Scotiabank Half Marathon (mid-June; www.scotiabank.com/ca/en/0,,7416,00.html): 5k run/walk known as Canada's most scenic half-marathon.

Concord Pacific Dragon Boat Festival (mid-June; www.dragonboatbc.ca): popular and ever-growing series of dragon boat races in the waters of False Creek.

B.C. Highland Games (late June; www.bchighlandgames.com): annual Scottish sports and cultural fiesta.

Gastown Grand Prix (mid-July; www.globalrelaygpp.org): professional cycling race through the historic streets of Gastown, which attracts talent from across North America and hordes of spectators.

Sea Wheeze Half-Marathon (August; www.seawheeze.com): popular run and yoga event via the parks, beaches and streets of downtown Vancouver.

Grouse Grind Mountain Run (August; www.grousemountain.com): 500 runners scramble up Vancouver's signature peak trail before collapsing in a heap at the top.

RBC GranFondo Whistler (September; www.rbcgranfondowhistler.com): highly popular mass-participation bike race from Vancouver to Whistler, via the Sea-to-Sky Highway.

VANCOUVER 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Athletes and spectators from around the world gathered in Vancouver and the alpine resort of Whistler in February and March 2010 for 17 days of thrilling competitions, amazing displays of sportsmanship and magical moments when lifelong dreams were finally realized. The event, along with the region's spectacular natural playground and its vibrant state-of-the-art venues, put Vancouver in the spotlight as a premier sporting destination.

VANCOUVER'S OLYMPIC VENUES

BC Place - Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Pacific Coliseum - Figure skating and short track speed skating

UBC Thunderbird Arena - Ice hockey and Paralympic sledge hockey

Vancouver Olympic Centre/Vancouver Paralympic Centre (Hillcrest Community Centre) - Curling

Canada Hockey Place (Rogers Arena) - Ice hockey

Cypress Mountain - Freestyle skiing and snowboarding.

Richmond Olympic Oval - Long-track speed skating

Extra!

The 2010 Olympic Winter Games in numbers:

17 days of competition

9 competition venues

615 medals awarded in 86 competitions

2,632 athletes

10,800 media attendees

Approximately 3.5 billion TV viewers worldwide

More than 3.3 million pairs of Vancouver 2010 red mittens sold

FIVE OLYMPIC FIRSTS

1. The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games marked the first time in history that Indigenous peoples were recognized as official Olympic hosting partners. The Four Host First Nations (Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations people) were involved in virtually every aspect of the event.
2. The 2010 Winter Games were the first Olympics to use a rigorous set of environmental criteria called Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for all new construction.
3. Vancouver was one of the largest cities ever to host a Winter Olympic Games.
4. With its mild climate, Vancouver has the warmest average temperatures of any previous Winter Olympic host.
5. The Games were among the most accessible ever staged, with barrier-free access for persons with disabilities at all venues and facilities.

THE SYMBOL OF VANCOUVER 2010 – INUKSHUK

The Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) selected a contemporary interpretation of the inukshuk as the official emblem of the 2010 Winter Games. Inukshuks are stone sculptures traditionally used by Canada's Inuit people as directional landmarks across the north, but have become adopted as a symbol of hope, friendship and hospitality throughout Canada. The emblem was unveiled in 2005 and named "Ilanaaq," the Inuit word for friend. Vancouver's most photographed inukshuk can be found at English Bay Beach.

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE: EXPERIENCING THE GAMES IN VANCOUVER

Sports-minded visitors still have plenty of ways to emulate the athletes, reawaken the vibe and experience the 2010 Olympic Winter Games on a visit to the city. Dip into these unique Olympic-themed activities:

- Skate at the Richmond Olympic Oval (www.richmondoval.ca). The Olympic speed skating venue has been transformed into a state-of-the-art public recreation facility with multiple skating rinks, ball courts and a first class fitness centre open to the public.
- Ski and snowboard the Olympic runs on Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) where Canada won its first gold medal of the Games.
- Swim at the Vancouver Olympic Centre (www.vancouverparks.ca). Home the Games' Olympic and Paralympic curling events, it's now a community aquatic centre, although some curling sheets remain.
- Pose for a photo at the Olympic Cauldron outside the Vancouver Convention Centre building. The cauldron is lit on special occasions, such as Canada Day
- Watch a Vancouver Canucks hockey game at Rogers Arena, the main hockey venue during the Games and the site of Canada's gold medal win in the men's event.
- Take the Canada Line to Olympic Village station and stroll east along the False Creek seawall. You'll soon find the state-of-the-art Olympic Village development, now Vancouver a funky waterfront community.
- Head up to Whistler's venues and try your hand cross-country skiing at the Whistler Olympic Park. Alternatively, speed fans should try the public skeleton and bobsleigh runs offered at the Whistler Sliding Centre.

Story idea:

Consider a story focusing on the legacy that the 2010 Olympic Games left to Vancouver...and how your readers can experience it when they visit. Take part in all the activities mentioned above, include interviews with locals on their memories of the event, and see if you can hunt down any souvenirs of Games mascots Quatchi, Miga and Sumi – try the souvenir stores in Chinatown. Create an image slideshow of your experiences.

EAT AND DRINK VANCOUVER

At the top table of Canadian dining cities, Vancouver serves a rich and diverse menu for travelling foodies. From arguably the best Chinese and Japanese dining outside Asia to a delicious dedication to local ingredients that encompasses everything from delectable seafood to carefully cultivated fruits and vegetables, visitors are spoilt for choice when it comes to experiencing local flavours.

Combine your visit with the *Dine Out Vancouver Festival* from late January to early February; www.tourismvancouver.com/dov). A wildly popular annual event where restaurants across the city offer three-course, prix fixe tasting menus, it's the largest restaurant festival in Canada and has expanded in recent years to include parties, tasting events, tours, classes and culinary showcases.

For the low-down on the scene the rest of the year, check *BC Living* (www.bcliv-ing.ca), the *Westender* (www.westender.com), the *Georgia Straight*, (www.straight.com) and *Scout* (<http://scoutmagazine.ca>). Don't miss *Vancouver Magazine's* annual Restaurant Awards issue in April for the latest headline-making eateries.

DINING SCENE STORIES

FAMOUS CHEFS

Vancouver has been luring North America's top chefs for years, combining them with a wealth of home-grown talent. All are inspired by the region's natural bounty as well as its complex fusion of influences from Asia and beyond. Among the city's culinary legends are Hidekazu Tojo from Tojo's (www.tojo's.com); David Hawksworth from Hawksworth (www.hawksworthrestaurant.com) and Nightingale (<http://hawknightingale.com>); Andrea Carlson (www.burdockandco.com); Frank Pabst from Blue Water Cafe (www.bluewatercafe.net); Vikram Vij and Meeru Dhalwala from Vij's (www.vijs.ca) multi-restaurant owning Angus An (www.maenam.ca) (<http://longtailkitchen.com>); (www.fatmaonoodles.com) and (<http://freebirdchickens.com>). Hot new chefs include Jefferson Alvarez (www.cacaovancouver.com); Curtis Luk (<http://missionkits.ca>); Letitia Wan (www.askforluiqi.com); and Mike Robbins (www.annalena.ca).

LOCAL FLAVOURS

Vancouver writers James Mackinnon and Alisa Smith brought the local food movement to the mainstream table with their 2007 book *The 100-Mile Diet* in which they attempted to eat for a year from ingredients grown or raised exclusively within 100 miles of their Vancouver apartment. The idea spread exponentially and Vancouverites and area restaurants have been pushing the local food agenda ever since, from Fanny Bay oysters and Salt Spring Island lamb to Fraser Valley squash and Okanagan peaches.

Where to eat: For a feast of West Coast flavours, check out Edible Canada (www.ediblecanada.com); Bishops (www.bishopsonline.com); West Restaurant (www.westrestaurant.com), and Forage (www.foragevancouver.com).

Story idea:

Vancouver is packed with restaurants which pay homage to the 100-mile Diet principals such as Burdock & Co, Forage, Fable and the Farmers Apprentice. Interview chefs and their producers about the trend and how important it is for the region. Time your visit to include one or two of the farmers' markets mentioned below.

Extra!

Salmon n' Bannock (www.salmonandbannock.net) on West Broadway is one of the most accessible ways for visitors to dip into authentic First Nations cuisine. Showcasing a variety of indigenous culinary traditions, the bistro's popular dishes include bison rib eye, pickled salmon and homemade bannock bread.

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

Farmers' markets are dotted around the city, each luring locals and savvy visitors with their cornucopia of fruit and vegetables grown just a few miles away. There are currently six summer markets (see www.eatlocal.org) in Downtown, Kitsilano, the West End, at Trout Lake, Mount Pleasant, and in front of the Pacific Central railway station. They typically run weekly from May or June to October, with an additional winter markets at Nat Bailey Stadium and Hastings Park from November to April. These markets are a great opportunity to meet local producers as well as those Vancouverites passionate about B.C. food.

Story idea:

Taste your way around the bounty of B.C. without leaving the city. Bring your camera and take a photo essay approach to experiencing the farmers' market scene, hunting down the most exotic regional ingredients you can find. Consider adding video interviews with local producers you meet along the way.

SEAFOOD

B.C. is arguably Canada's seafood capital and Vancouver's dining scene is swimming with great aquatic ingredients. It's the diversity that is most striking, from top-notch fine-dining establishments to street food taco stands and finger-licking fish and chip spots on Granville Island and beyond. But if you're a true seafood lover, hunt down the following regional specialties - and keep your eyes peeled for menus with the Ocean Wise (www.oceanwise.ca) sustainable seafood logo.

- **Geoduck** (a giant among clams that's pronounced "goo-ee-duck") is available in season at Sun Sui Wah Seafood Restaurant (www.sunsuiwah.com) Raw Bar at the Fairmont Pacific Rim (www.fairmont.com/pacific-rim-vancouver/dining/the-raw-bar/) and Blue Water Cafe and Raw Bar (www.bluewatercafe.net)

- **B.C. rolls** are available at Tojo's Restaurant (www.tojos.com)
- **Salmon candy** (hot smoked salmon) is available at Salmon House on the Hill (www.salmonhouse.com) and Granville Island Public Market (www.granvilleisland.com)
- **Live spot prawns** are available in season (May-June) – at restaurants across the region. Look out for special spot prawn tasting menus.
- **West Coast oysters** are available across the city, try them at Joe Fortes Seafood & Chop House (www.joefortes.ca), Blue Water Cafe & Raw Bar (www.bluewatercafe.net) and Coast (www.glowbalgroup.com)
- **Gooseneck Barnacles** wildly unattractive—they look like a dinosaur claw—this delicious delicacy was certified as Ocean Wise in 2015. Hand-harvested by First Nations fishermen on Clayoquot Sound you'll find them in season at hot spots like Wildebeest and the Blue Water Café.

Story idea:

Take an adventurous dip into Vancouver's fresh seafood scene. Start onboard a boat with a local fisher then take your fresh catch to a city chef who specialises in seafood preparation. Learn a few tricks of the trade and end your day with a dining crawl around the city's great seafood restaurants.

STREET FOOD

Vancouver's much-anticipated street food scene launched in 2010. The city had eased bylaws that previously prevented anything but hotdogs and chestnuts from being sold on sidewalks and, after a tense application process, 17 vendor spots were awarded. Within months, more carts arrived and the scene took off. Now there are more than 100 carts across the city and the trucks have become an established part of the city's dining scene. Hungry locals and visitors can have their pick of fish tacos, dim sum, barbecued pork sandwiches, fusion Korean barbecue beef and much more. Download the free smartphone app to find vendors (<http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/find-a-food-truck-vendor.aspx>).

CULINARY ACTIVITIES

Vancouver has a rich and accessible restaurant scene, but if you want to eat deeper try one of these story-friendly approaches:

FOOD TOURS

The city offers several tours aimed at visiting foodies. Vancouver Foodie Tours (www.vancouverfoodietours.ca) and Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts (www.picachef.com) can take you on chef-led tours of Granville Island Public Market or Chinatown, while Vancouver Food Tour (www.vancouverfoodtour.com) and Off the Eaten Track (www.offtheeatentracktours.ca) offer a range of options, from a tasting tour of Gastown's gourmet restaurants and bars to a walking tour of the city's famous street food carts.

COOKING SCHOOLS

Highly popular with locals, downtown's Dirty Apron Cooking School (www.dirtyapron.com) offers a wide range of nightly and weekly classes aimed at all skill levels, with themes like Italian cooking and French cuisine, or head to the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts (www.picachef.com). You can take a class with one of the city's best chefs at Ambrosia Adventures (www.ambrosiaadventures.com/) where talent such as Boulevard's Alex Chen and Fable's Trevor Bird teach small groups.

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

Dine Out Vancouver Festival (www.dineoutvancouver.com) is the city's biggest annual food event. But many community festivals across the region also offer great opportunities to hang out and eat with the locals. Consider the Powell Street Festival (www.powellstreetfestival.com) and its Japanese food; Greek Day (www.greekday.com), with its saliva-triggering lamb dishes; and June's Italian Day on the drive (<http://italianday.ca>), where performances fuse with a wandering smorgasbord of great grub from arancini and zeppole to pizza and gelato .

Extra!

Long table dining is a hugely popular trend in Vancouver with locals rubbing elbows and eating – and making new friends – at shared counters that encourage conviviality and bonhomie. If you fancy joining them, check out the Irish Heather (www.irishheather.com) and Salt Tasting Room (salttastingroom.com), as well as the market dinners offered by Edible Canada (www.ediblecanada.com).

KEY RESTAURANT DISTRICTS

Vancouver is teeming with distinctive dining areas where you can't throw a sushi roll without hitting a good eatery. Gastown is a haven for the city's up-and-coming chefs and bartenders, the best place in the city for a progressive dinner going from restaurant to bar, having a different course at each. Yaletown, where the city's beautiful people come to see and be seen at hip eateries with sidewalk patios. The West End, known for Japanese ramen, Izakaya pubs and late-night Korean noodle and karaoke spots. Chinatown, has superb traditional bakeries and dim sum haunts alongside modern fusion hotspots, serving cutting edge cocktails. Granville Island is famous for its market-fresh take-away spots and casual eateries with great city-and-mountain views. Kitsilano long known for its excellent vegetarian restaurants and quirky coffee houses now boasts a strip of hot new restaurants, especially along 4th Avenue. South Main, filled with small, eclectic joints, many catering to local veggies as well as a comprehensive craft beer scene. Commercial Drive AKA 'Little Italy' has independent coffee bars and diverse ethnic eateries. Richmond a neighbouring city 30 minutes from downtown Vancouver, is often lauded for having the best Chinese cuisine outside of China.

Story idea:

Not every Vancouver restaurant is a fine dining joint. Consider a story on the trail of the city's bargain eating options. This could include visits to Granville Island Public Market for cheap takeout; a trek to the Punjabi Market area for all-you-can-eat curry specials; and lunch at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts, where

eager student chefs serve up gourmet meals at good-value prices. You could also check out Vancouver's vast array of street eats, from Japanese-style hot dogs to pulled pork sandwiches. And don't miss Save on Meats, the reinvented Downtown Eastside diner with its fully restored landmark neon sign and great-value comfort food dishes.

JAPANESE DINING

Metro Vancouver has an astonishing and highly authentic array of great Japanese eateries. From the best sushi and sashimi restaurants outside Japan – try Tojo's (www.tojos.com) and Miku (www.mikurestaurant.com) – to a hugely popular ramen scene around the Robson/Denman area in the West End.

But one subsection of the scene has really taken off in recent years. In Japan, izakayas are cozy neighbourhood bars serving cheap beer and finger food and these have been transformed in Vancouver into some of the best places in town to sample Japanese comfort dishes and a wide range of imported beer, sake and unique cocktails – all wrapped in an evocative shell of wood-lined izakaya authenticity.

Where to eat: *For a taster, consider local outlets of Guu (www.guu-izakaya.com) and Hapa Izakaya (www.hapaizakaya.com)*

Story idea:

Plan a Japanese night out in Vancouver and make it as authentic as possible. Include visits to local izakayas, and perhaps a karaoke bar or two along the way. Consider adding a visit to Richmond to your story – or grabbing a hot dog at Japadog, a Vancouver street food phenomenon which blends traditional street hot dogs with Japanese flavours such as seaweed and miso.

CHINESE DINING

Home to one of the largest Chinese communities outside China, Metro Vancouver is also the home of Canada's best Chinese dining scene. But while traditional dim sum houses and chatty seafood-based neighbourhood eateries are still ubiquitous here, there have been some key developments in recent years. Chinese restaurants have now spread out across the city, including the "modern Chinatown" of Richmond. Also, the traditional streets of Chinatown are now home to some innovative Chinese eating and drinking establishments, such as Bao Bei Chinese Brasserie (www.bao-bei.ca) and the Keefer Bar (www.thekeefbar.com).

Where to eat: *The city's best Chinese restaurants include the award-winning Kirin Mandarin Restaurant (www.kirinrestaurant.com) and Sun Sui Wah (www.sun-suiwah.ca).*

Extra!

Each year, Vancouver Magazine names what it considers the city's top restaurants in a wide range of categories. In 2016, Best Upscale Restaurant was

Hawksworth (<https://hawksworthrestaurant.com>); Best New Restaurant was Royal Dinette (www.royaldinette.ca); and Restaurant of the Year was Maenam (www.maenam.ca).

DRINK VANCOUVER

Named by the L.A. Times as “Canada’s craft beer capital” (November 2015), Vancouver is also at the heart of Canada’s distillery boom with half a dozen **small batch distilleries launching in the city since 2012**. Add in a **burgeoning wine region** a stone’s throw from the city, and the **award-winning Okanagan wine region** just a few hour’s drive away and you’ll see why drinking connoisseurs flock to Vancouver.

B.C.’S TOP WINES

A four-hour drive from the city brings you to the rolling, lakeside hills of the Okanagan, home to one of Canada’s top grape-growing regions. Luckily you don’t have to drive that far for a sip: the tipples created by the area’s 100 or so wineries – including celebrated producers like Quail’s Gate, Mission Hill and Sumac Ridge – are readily available in Vancouver bars and restaurants. Ask your server for some recommendations. And don’t forget the province’s other, smaller wine regions: Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands are home to some popular wineries, while closer to the city – and easily visited on a day out – Richmond and the Fraser Valley have their own smattering of producers. Wherever you end up drinking, save time for a sip of icewine. A sweet dessert wine produced from grapes frozen on the vine, it’s one of B.C.’s signature drinks. For more information on the region’s wine industry, visit www.winebc.com.

Where to drink: You’ll find B.C. wines on the menu of pretty much every bar and restaurant in town. Go in-depth and time your visit for the annual Vancouver International Wine Festival (<http://vanwinefest.ca>) or head to local wine-loving spots like Forage (www.foragerestaurant.com), Vancouver Urban Winery (<http://vancouverurbanwinery.com>) or Tap & Barrel (www.tapandbarrel.com) to try flights of beautiful BC wines.

Story idea:

Vancouver’s cocktail scene is going from strength to strength, and its bartenders love to push their creativity by entering –and often winning –tough cocktail contests. You can taste internationally award-winning drinks at many bars, as well as drink molecular gastronomy-inspired creations from alcoholic airs, warm foams and booze “pearls”. Interview some of the main players including Grant Sceney at the Fairmont Pacific Rim (www.fairmont.com/pacific-rim-vancouver/) who came fourth in the world representing Canada in the 2014 World Class contest, or Sabrina Dhaliwal at UVA (www.uvavancouver.com), who won the 2015 Belvedere Challenge to Create the Next Legendary Martini in London.

CRAFT BEERS

Vancouver is a craft beer lover’s paradise with 45 microbreweries—many less than five years old— within the city limits. According to craft beer writer Joe

Wiebe, “*Right now, there’s no more exciting place to drink craft beer in B.C. –and possibly all of Canada.*” Most breweries have tasting rooms where you can sample their brews with like-minded hop heads and fill ‘growlers’ to take home. East Van – dubbed “yeast Van” – offers the most breweries within walking distance and makes for the perfect place for walking brewery tour around this historically-industrial neighbourhood.

Need something beyond liquid distraction? Brassneck (<http://brassneck.ca>) has a different food truck outside each evening and you can take the food inside to enjoy with a tasting paddle of beers. Off The Rail (www.offtherailbrewing.com) has a tempting selection of cured sausages. Doan’s (<http://doancraftbrewing.com>) offers Lego nights and vintage video game machines. The best way to experience the best of Vancouver beer is to “hops” on a Vancouver Brewery Tours (www.vancouverbrewerytours.com), which leads jaunts to many of these breweries.

Where to drink: *Time your visit for the annual Vancouver Craft Beer Week (www.vancouvercraftbeerweek.com) or down a few brews from B.C. (and beyond) at Tap & Barrel (www.tapandbarrel.com); Craft Beer Market (vancouver.craftbeermarket.ca); The Alibi Room (www.alibi.ca); and The Lamplighter (<http://donnellygroup.ca/the-lamplighter/>).*

Story idea:

Vancouver was founded on booze – just ask the jaunty statue of John “Gassy Jack” Deighton perched atop a whisky barrel in Gastown’s Maple Tree Square. The statue is close to the spot where Deighton built his first saloon, a shack that sparked a rash of development that later became the city of Vancouver. Head away from Gastown, walk 30 minutes along Powell Street, past the industrial port and old railway lines, to what’s become B.C.’s craft brewery district: here you can visit almost a dozen different breweries in just a few blocks.

SPIRITED VANCOUVER

Vancouver is at the heart of a distillery revolution sweeping B.C. thanks to a change in the law. In 2012 there were seven distilleries, and as of December 2015 there are 51 licensed distilleries in B.C. –with 12 applications in process – more than in the rest of Canada put together. Vancouver has more than half a dozen craft distillers, making spirits with locally sourced, unique West Coast ingredients, in some of its coolest neighbourhoods, with tasting lounges and talented bartenders on hand to whip up craft cocktails.

Granville island’s Artisan Sake Maker makes Fraser Valley junmai from 100 percent B.C.-grown rice. Long Table Distillery recently bagged gold and silver medals at the 2015 World Spirits Competition; try the silky-smooth cucumber gin made with Sunshine Coast cucumbers. Odd Society Spirits distill small-batch spirits using B.C. ingredients such as arbutus bark in their bittersweet vermouth and Abbotsford blackcurrants in their crème de cassis. The “really, really” small-

batch Sons of Vancouver distillery in North Vancouver makes chili vodka with local grains and a blend of locally sourced and Thai dragon chilis, and their local blackberry honey-spiked amaretto is incredibly popular.

STORY IDEA:

Check out Vancouver's spirited distillery scene on a tour of its tasting rooms where you can meet the distillers, see how the spirits are made, and get to try them in a guided tasting. Many of the distilleries also have cocktail licenses, so you can sample a truly local cocktail experience.

HAPPY HOUR

Thanks to a recent law change, Vancouver now has happy hour! Explore some of the city's best food and drink bargains from "buck a shuck" dollar oyster deals to \$5 cocktail specials. Some of the city's most popular spots include Joe Fortes (www.joefortes.ca), Boulevard (<http://boulevardvancouver.ca>), Latab (<http://latab.ca>) and La Mezcaleria (www.lamezcaleria.ca).

VANCOUVER'S BIG NIGHT OUT

Vancouver is home to some of Western Canada's hottest clubs and live music venues. For listings, pick up a copy of the free *Georgia Straight* city weekly, visit www.clubvibes.com or just head straight to these recommended nightlife neighbourhoods.

GRANVILLE STREET ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

In B.C.'s long-established nightlife capital, expect crowds of revellers, lots of twinkling neon and plenty of mainstream clubs and bars. Check out Ceili's Irish Pub & Restaurant (www.ceilis.com); the Roxy (www.roxyvan.com); and the Venue (<http://venuelive.ca>). The Granville Strip is also home to the indie-inspired Commodore Ballroom (www.thecommodoreballroom.com).

GASTOWN

Luring a heady mix of hipsters and bar-hoppers to its historic brick-paved streets, the nightlife hotspots in Gastown include Guilt & Co (www.quiltandcompany.com) and MIA (www.areyoumia.com) for a pumping nightclub vibe; the Lamplighter (www.donnellygroup.ca) for live music and late-night dance floor shenanigans; and the Blarney Stone (www.blarneystone.ca) for a live Irish band party vibe. This is also one of the city's leading pub districts, with boozy favourites like Irish Heather (www.irishheather.com) and Steamworks (www.steamworks.com).

YALETOWN

Colonizing the historic loft buildings and refurbished rail warehouses of Vancouver's "little soho" area, Yaletown is a sophisticated nightlife option, with the swanky bar of the Opus Hotel (www.opushotel.com); and the underground cocktail cool of the Hello Goodbye Bar (<http://hellogoodbyebar.com>). Also check out the beautiful people at Bar None (<http://donnellygroup.ca/bar-none/>) or join the microbrew beer crowd at the ever-popular Yaletown Brewing Company (<http://www.mjg.ca>).

MAIN STREET

There are two key scenes on this major East Vancouver thoroughfare: the welcoming, hipster-loving neighbourhood bars in Mount Pleasant and the cool scene in and around the Chinatown end of Main, where hotspots include cocktail and burlesque central at Keefer Bar (www.thekeefebars.com), the funky Biltmore cabaret (www.biltmorecabaret.com), the ex-“adult” cinema now one of the area’s hippest clubs, the Fox Cabaret (www.foxcabaret.com) and the party-loving Fortune Sound Club (www.fortunesoundclub.com). Consider a story comparing each of these distinctive nightlife areas.

Extra!

Live music is a Vancouver passion. Along with revered venues like the Commodore Ballroom, there are some great off-the-beaten path venues to catch a show. Consider the rock and indie scene at the Media Club (www.themediaclub.ca) or the Malkin Bowl (www.malkinbowl.com) – this tree-shadowed outdoor auditorium in Stanley Park offers several live shows throughout the summer, with recent performers ranging from Elvis Costello to Passenger.

TEN PLACES TO CATCH THE GAME

For a casual night out and a chance to rub shoulders with the city’s hockey, football or soccer fans, head to these favourite bars to catch a live game on the TV screens.

- Malone’s Urban Drinkery (www.malones.bc.ca)
- Red Card Sports Bar & Eatery (www.redcardsportsbar.ca)
- Doolin’s Irish Pub (Comfort Inn Downtown; www.doolins.ca)
- The Bimini (www.donnelygroup.ca)
- Charles Bar (www.thecharlesbar.ca)
- Yaletown Brewing Company (<http://www.mjg.ca>)
- Steamworks (www.steamworks.com)
- The Blackbird (www.donnelygroup.ca)
- Mahony & Sons (www.mahonyandsons.com)
- Score on Davie (www.scoreondavie.com)

FOODIE VANCOUVER QUOTES

“I was fascinated by the local ingredients and the customers. Everyone is a foodie here. I love it.” – *Jean Georges Vongerichten*

“It’s a mix of really strong Asian and Pacific Rim influence, but there’s also that whole Northwest product-driven mentality that they have in Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. The kind of mentality among cooks and diners that you get when you have a lot of good stuff, good ingredients around you. You have a high density of really good cooks and chefs and high density of really good products to work with.” – *Anthony Bourdain*

"If I had a choice of where to eat Chinese food tonight, it would be Vancouver – best value and best chefs, rivalling the quality in Hong Kong." – *Martin Yan, San Francisco*

"...the city is so obsessed with haute cuisine... diners here spend more money eating out than any other city in Canada... and follow every move of local celebrity chefs with the relish of British soccer fans." – *Alexandra Gill, The Globe & Mail*

"British Columbia produces excellent wines but exports very little to the U.S. - a fabulous excuse for a pilgrimage to Vancouver." – *Rhonda May, Food & Wine*

"This is Vancouver, where the culinary bar is raised higher and the restaurants are more trendsetting than anywhere in the United States." – *Tan Vinh, Seattle Times*

"The number of truly outstanding restaurants in Vancouver is astonishing, and the prices are ridiculously low when compared to other food capitals..." – *New York Times.com*

"Vancouver cuisine is diverse and evolving. Restaurants serving Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese food thrive, of course, but so do those featuring regional fish cookery, Indian food by way of the Pacific Northwest, and French-inspired New Canadian dishes." – *Bon Appetit*

"For serious China aficionados, it is possible to dine on first-rate dim sum in different eateries every day for a week, spend entire afternoons in Asian shopping malls or tea salons, and end the night at the movies or a karaoke bar, without hearing anything but Cantonese or Mandarin." – *Washington Post*

"Fusion is the operative word in restaurant-rich Vancouver, where Northwest meets Japanese meets Indian meets Chinese." – *National Geographic Traveler*

"From grazing among food stalls in Granville Island's Public Market to sampling dim sum in Chinatown, Vancouver is a foodie's fantasyland." – *USA Today*

"This great restaurant city is the heartland of every admirable (and sometimes infuriating) food cause you've ever encountered – local, sustainable, organic, and eco-gastronomical among them." – *Bon Appetit*

SHOPPING AND SPA

From First Nations artworks to smoked salmon and quirky clothing designed by the city's up-and-coming fashionistas, Vancouver has a basketful of tempting and original shopping options for visitors. And it's not just souvenirs that will fill your suitcase; the city is divided into several distinctive shopping areas, each with their own specialities. Once you've finished scratching your shopping itch, Vancouver's spas offer a relaxing way to wind-down and contemplate your upcoming credit card bill.

Clothing-wise, the city offers a great selection of home-grown outdoor togs, but there's also been a wide-ranging evolution "from fleece to fashion" here in recent years. On your shopping weave around the city, look out for these popular Vancouver labels, stores and designers: lululemon, Arc'teryx, John Fluevog, Twigg & Hottie, Lynn Steven Boutique and Smoking Lily.

VANCOUVER'S TOP SHOPPING AREAS

DOWNTOWN

Centered on Robson Street – Vancouver's main retailing promenade and host to almost all of North America's leading clothing brands – the city's downtown core is often teeming with busy shoppers clutching their latest purchases and heading to their next credit card-friendly port of call. Shoes, high fashion and jewellery are the mainstays here, and there are also plenty of restaurants and coffee shops for those who need to refuel.

Aside from popular stores like Roots, Gap, Banana Republic, Aritzia and lululemon, you can hit up the city's department stores including the recently opened Nordstrom store, the Bay at the intersection of Granville and Georgia Streets, and just a block down Granville, you'll find Holt Renfrew, an all-Canadian department store focused on lux designer brands, and Nordstrom's flagship store. If it's raining, seek refuge at the city's main shopping mall, Pacific Centre (www.pacificcentre.com).

YALETOWN

Occupying a plethora of renovated brick warehouses bounded by Nelson, Homer, Drake and Pacific streets, chic boutiques and unique stores are all the rage in Yaletown, catering to its fashionable inhabitants and visitors. Check out these absolutely fabulous Yaletown stores to get a flavor of the neighbourhood: Fine Finds (<http://finefindsboutique.com>): dive into accessory heaven with everything from bridal gifts and hair fascinators to Sesame Street toques and vintage-style jewellery. Goorin Bros. Hat store (<http://www.goorin.com>): independent style at its most quirky, offering stylish hats for men, women and children. Moonlight Dog Cafe (<http://www.moonlightdogcafe.com>): natural pet products store which offers holistic pet nutrition seminars and a doggie hang-out lounge with Wifi and library. Xoxolat (www.xoxolat.com): chocolate boutique specializing in single origin and estate chocolates from around the world, and featuring a housemade

range of unusual flavours such as bacon, tomato and olive; tortilla chips and lime; and Masala chai.

SOUTH MAIN

Concentrated on the Main Street area between 19th and 25th avenues, this enticing strip of unique indie stores offers a great selection of clothing, homewares and jewellery created by local and nationally-renowned designers. A hotbed of quirky outlets – including Eugene Choo, Smoking Lily and Front & Co. – this is where the hippest Vancouverites come to dress themselves. But it's not just about togs: look out for cool record and stationary stores, as well as funky restaurants, packed brewery tasting rooms, and coffee bars.

Story idea

Consider an up-to-the-minute shopping story on South Main for the kind of traveller who appreciates quirky, one-of-a-kind designer clothing. Your story could offer a first-hand review of what's on offer among the eclectic stores here as well as including interviews with local designers whose work is on the shelves. Add a sidebar of your best purchases in the area and recommended pit stops to drink and dine along the way.

GASTOWN

Walk towards the mountains from the downtown core, and you'll soon come to Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood. But Gastown's cobbled streets and heritage buildings have been dramatically reinvented in recent years and are now home to some of the city's most exciting independent stores – from unique Vancouver style icons such as Fleuvog shoes to ultra-hip concept store, Secret Location. Check out local brands such as Kit & Ace, a contemporary luxury brand for men and women. Browse the city's favourite footwear at John Fluevog's flagship store where you'll find elegantly playful shoes housed in a striking glass storefront with two-storeys. Hipster meets practicality at Old Faithful, a modern day general store featuring everything from flasks of small batch Tuthilltown Bourbon barrel maple syrup from Québec to hand-sewn Horween leather iPhone sleeves. Look out for unique art galleries and First Nations artisan outlets. The area's main Water Street thoroughfare is also Vancouver's souvenir central, housing large gift shops in the shadow of the famed steam clock. This is the place to pick up your maple leaf T-shirts, jade jewellery and "moose dropping" chocolates.

GRANVILLE ISLAND

A must-see for shoppers craving unique and unusual gifts, artsy Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com) is a former industrial area transformed into a warren of artisan studios and shopping nooks. It's easy to spend a day ambling among the stores selling everything from pottery, jewellery and glassware to books, clothing and wine. While children will not want to miss the Kids Market of toys and activities, everyone should save time for the bustling Public Market. Teeming with deli counters, bakeries, fishmongers and pyramids of gleaming fruit and vegetables, it's popular with browsers – and there's a great on-site food court for a lunchtime refuelling stop.

KITSILANO

A former 1960s hippy hangout transformed into a neighbourhood of pricey heritage homes, “Kits” has a comfy, laid-back feel and a selection of stores aimed at well-off urban professionals. Kitsilano brought the world fashionable yoga pants, lululemon was founded on West Fourth Avenue in Kits, and you can still visit the store and stock up on those essential yoga buys. A shopping hub for the outdoor adventurer, West Fourth is also the spot to dress for any kind of hiking, biking, boarding or skiing adventure.

But if working up a sweat isn't your bag, stay chill –Kits has everything from your hip vinyl to designer footwear needs covered. Check out one of Canada's most famous record stores at Zulu, discover creative chocolates made with local ingredients at Chocolate Arts, and check out the city's favourite cheese store at Les Amis du Fromage. The area makes for a pleasant afternoon stroll and there are plenty of cafés and restaurants – plus nearby beaches – if you need a break.

SOUTH GRANVILLE

Occupying the Granville Street area between 4th and 16th avenues, South Granville is a popular, highly strollable shopping area. Once home only to family restaurants and small grocery stores, it's now lined with designer fashions, cool interior accessories and tempting, must-have knick knacks. A kaleidoscope of small, independent galleries has also colonized its flanks – check out the Bau-xi Gallery and Uno Langmann Fine Art – while one of the city's best high-end delis and grocery stores, Meinhardt Fine Foods, offers lots of local and international treats for visiting gourmands—you'll also find them downtown at 609 Granville Street. A browser's paradise, South Granville also has some superb restaurants including West, and Vij's Rangoli, along with the Stanley Theatre (Arts Club Theatre Company, www.artsclub.com).

Story idea

Consider a story profiling three Vancouver shopping neighbourhoods for visitors. Select the most diverse areas you can find and offer first-hand reviews of its shopping highlights. You could include the galleries of South Granville, the quirky clothing shops of South Main, the mainstream buzz of Robson Street or the chi-chi élan of Yaletown.

TOP TEN VANCOUVER SOUVENIRS

If you're looking for the perfect souvenir to remind you of your time in Vancouver, look no further. Here's a list to fill your suitcase:

1. Maple syrup (or maple mustard!) from Granville Island.
2. Coffee beans from one of the city's artisan roasters such as 49th Parallel, JJ Bean or Matchstick, to bring home that Vancouver buzz.
3. A copy of the short story collection “*The Vancouver Stories*” from the Listel Hotel (www.thelistelhotel.com).
4. A First Nations bentwood box from Coastal Peoples Fine Art Gallery (www.coastalpeoples.com).
5. A blown glass bauble from an artisan on Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com).

6. A Vancouver Canucks hockey puck.
7. A tasty, locally made delicacy from Edible Canada (www.edible-canada.com).
8. A bottle of small-batch spirits made right here in Vancouver from one of the many distilleries. Try the cucumber gin from Long Table or vodka from Odd Society Spirits.
9. Seed packets from VanDusen Botanical Garden to take the blooms home (www.vandusengarden.org).
10. Locally grown ginseng from Chinatown.

SPAS

Given Vancouver's healthy lifestyle, it's no wonder that spas flourish here. The city's day spas – no longer the pampered princess domains of the past – are swamped with locals (male and female) begging to be wrapped in seaweed, slathered with mud, pummelled by jets of water and generally exfoliated, kneaded, purified and revitalized. Hotels and spas are responding to the demand by expanding and investing in the newest products and treatments.

If you fancy a treatment with a special Vancouver flavour, consider the Fairmont Pacific Rim's Willow Stream Spa for its Coastal Mountain Body Wrap; the Shangri-La Hotel's CHI Spa for its West Coast Wave Massage; and the West Coast Seaweed Journey at the Pan Pacific Hotel's Spa Utopia.

Among Vancouver's popular spa outlets are:

- Absolute Spa (several locations, see www.absolutspa.com)
- Miraj Hammam Spa (South Granville; www.mirajhammam.com)
- Skoah (several locations; www.skoah.com)
- Spa Utopia (Pan Pacific Hotel Vancouver; www.spautopia.ca)
- Spruce Body Lab (Yaletown; www.sprucebodylab.com)
- Vida Wellness Spa (three locations in downtown Vancouver; www.vidawellness.com)
- CHI, The Spa at Shangri-La (Shangri-La Hotel; www.shangri-la.com/vancouver)
- Smile Thai Wellness spa (<http://smilethaiwellness.com>)
- Willow Stream Spa (Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel; www.fairmont.com)
- Sense, a Rosewood Spa (Rosewood Hotel Georgia; www.rosewood-hotels.com/hotelgeorgia)

Story idea

Vancouver's spas are not just for women and many have developed dedicated and highly popular programs for men in recent years. In particular, the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver's Absolute Spa has a strong focus on the fellas with dozens of specic treatments – from waxing to body scrubs – aimed at men. Consider a story on this spa from a man's perspective, including several treatments as part of your story.

CONTACTS

TOURISM VANCOUVER

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210-200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, B.C., V6C 3L6
604-682-2222
www.tourismvancouver.com

Tourism Vancouver Visitor Centre

Plaza Level, 200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, B.C., V6C 3L6
604-683-2000

www.tourismvancouver.com/media

OTHER B.C. TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS

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12th Floor, 510 Burrard Street
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USEFUL WEB RESOURCES

- **Tourismvancouver.com**: our site has lots of great story ideas and useful background information. Our full media kit is also available online.
- **Allianceforarts.com**: the Alliance for Arts and Culture provides a weekly events calendar and extensive pages of information on the arts in Vancouver.
- **Ticketstonight.ca**: a comprehensive source of event tickets, offering visitors access to performing arts, live theatre, sports, music and festivals.
- **Vancouverhistory.ca**: a dense resource of information on Vancouver's colourful history, complete with handy timeline.
- **Scoutmagazine.ca**: popular web magazine featuring Vancouver neighbourhoods, character profiles and restaurants.

- **Vancouverisawesome.com**: colourful web magazine focussing on the quirky side of life in the city.

RADIO

- **CKNW** (www.cknw.com): broadcasts live on 980 AM in the Lower Mainland, on HD Radio at 01.1 FM sub-channel 2, and live via website.
- **CKWX News 1130** (www.news1130.com): Western Canada's largest radio newsroom, CKWX News 1130 delivers local, national and international news as it happens. Broadcasts on 1130 AM in the Lower Mainland and also streams live through its website.
- **CBC Radio 690 AM** (www.cbc.ca/bc): commercial-free, national public radio service, offering local news and interviews.
- **Roundhouse Radio 98.3FM** (<http://www.roundhouseradio.com>) a Vancouver community radio station with hyperlocal content and an 80 percent talk and 20 percent music split.

TELEVISION

The city's four major TV news stations provide competitive newscasts at 8 a.m., noon, 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Global BC has the highest viewing ratings for their newscast, followed by BC-CTV. Omni is a multicultural news station.

- **Global BC** (www.globaltvbc.com)
- **CTV British Columbia** (www.ctvbc.ctv.ca)
- **CITY TV** (www.citytv.com/vancouver)
- **CBC-TV** (www.cbc.ca/bc)
- **OMNI** (www.omnibc.ca)

MAJOR NEWSPAPERS

- **Vancouver Sun** (www.vancouversun.com): the city's major broadsheet daily newspaper.
- **The Province** (www.theprovince.com): the city's major tabloid daily newspaper.
- **Sing Tao** (www.singtao.ca): Canada's largest daily Chinese newspaper.
- **Ming Pao** (www.mingpaovan.com): another popular daily Chinese newspaper.
- **Georgia Straight** (www.straight.com): Vancouver's free news and entertainment weekly.
- **Westender** (www.westender.com): quirky downtown weekly newspaper.
- **Vancouver Courier** (www.vancourier.com): established city community newspaper.
- **Xtra!** (www.xtra.ca): gay-oriented city weekly.
- **Metro** (www.metronews.ca/vancouver): free daily newspaper
- **24 Hours:** (<http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/>): free daily newspaper

MAGAZINES

- ***Vancouver Magazine*** (www.vancouvermagazine.com): popular city life-style magazine covering urban culture, dining, events and style.
- ***Arts and Cultural Guide to B.C.*** (www.art-bc.com): A free, glossy guide to art events, galleries and people in the arts throughout the province.
- ***City Food*** (www.cityfood.com): free culinary newsmagazine covering Vancouver's dining scene.
- ***Where Vancouver*** (www.where.ca/Vancouver): handy visitors' guide to city neighbourhoods, restaurants, travel, attractions, lodging, dining and shopping. Free at hotels and motels across the Lower Mainland.