

A nighttime photograph of the Vancouver skyline across a body of water. The city lights are reflected in the calm water, and the dark silhouettes of mountains are visible in the background under a deep blue sky. Two large rocks are visible in the foreground water.

Top 10 Reasons to Return

If you think Vancouver is beautiful right now,
just wait until you see the city in the summer

BY SHERI RADFORD, JENNIFER PATTERSON
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Downtown Vancouver and the North Shore mountains, as seen from the oceanfront between Kitsilano Beach and Vanier Park



1 Gorgeous Scenery

Vancouver has no shortage of breathtaking outdoor escapes: the rolling waves of the Pacific Ocean, the almost-year-round snow-capped mountains, and greenery as far as the eye can see. Wiggle your toes in the sand at one of the many public beaches, including Kits Beach—rated one of North America’s top 10 sexiest beaches by *Forbes Traveler*—or Wreck Beach, where clothing is optional. Head up the mountains for scenic 360-degree views, challenging hikes and glimpses of local wildlife. Grab your camera and visit one of the city’s many green spaces, including VanDusen Botanical Garden (page 195) and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (page 194). Bike, walk or run Vancouver’s famous seawall, a 22-km (13.7-mi) shoreline stretch that wraps around Stanley Park (page 195), past Science World (page 193) and Granville Island (page 204), finishing up at Kits Beach.—J.P.

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A team races in the annual Dragon Boat Festival in front of Science World at Telus World of Science



2 Major Attractions

Seek refuge in Stanley Park (page 195), where you can see summertime displays of roses and rhododendrons, catch outdoor theatre shows, frolic on beaches and ogle baby beluga whales at Vancouver Aquarium (page 193). Views abound at Capilano Suspension Bridge (page 192) and Grouse Mountain (page 196), where observing the antics of Grinder and Coola—two orphaned grizzly bears—is a popular summer activity. False Creek forms the backdrop for Granville Island (page 204), a hub for artist studios. Impromptu street performances are common, the Public Market boasts seasonal bounty from local farmers and the public fish sales dock is a local favourite for buying fresh, in-season seafood. Closed through most of March, Science World (page 193) is spending our Winter Games as the pavilion for the Sochi 2014 Winter Games. This iconic “golf ball” is a fixture in the Vancouver skyline; inside you’ll find hands-on exhibits, science demos and educational films in the OMNIMAX Theatre.—*K.U.*

3 Festivals & Special Events

July and August brim with outdoor events that take full advantage of the long, sun-soaked days. Bard on the Beach presents Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Falstaff* and *Henry V* against a stunning ocean-and-mountains backdrop. Theatre Under the Stars mounts *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Singin’ in the Rain* on alternating nights in Stanley Park’s Malkin Bowl. The Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) celebrates its 100th anniversary with rides, midway games, outdoor concerts, parades, the PNE prize home, mini-donuts and, of course, the Superdogs. The Vancouver Folk Music Festival brings musicians from around the world to Jericho Beach Park for three days of groovy sounds. Pride Week bursts with a rainbow of gay-pride events, culminating in the Pride Parade and Sunset Beach Festival. The HSBC Celebration of Light marks its 20th anniversary with fireworks over English Bay that light up Metro Vancouver.—*S.R.*



PHOTOS: (FAR L) BY TOM RYAN COURTESY TOURISM BC; (NEAR L) BY SHERI RADFORD



4 Outdoor Adventures

When the temperature rises, outdoor enthusiasts take to the seas for kayaking, scuba diving and whale watching. From late April through October, the waters surrounding Vancouver and Vancouver Island are abundant with orcas (formerly called killer whales). Whale-watching trips offer glimpses of other wildlife, too, including porpoises, sea lions, harbour seals and eagles. Thrill-seekers in both Vancouver and Whistler ride high above the treetops of rainforests while harnessed to a cable called a zipline. Avid cyclist? Participate in myriad bike races, or head to the Whistler Mountain Bike Park for 1,507 m (4,946 ft) of bike trails and a jump park. Hike the mountains and nearby national parks, or take a low-key stroll around the seawall. After a long day in the sun, relax like a Vancouverite with a yoga session on the beach.—*K.U.*



5 Golfing, Sailing & Skiing

You might have heard a rumour that it's possible to golf, sail and ski in Metro Vancouver, all on the same day. Unlike most rumours, this one is true. Highly rated courses such as University Golf Club, Westwood Plateau, Furry Creek Golf and Country Club, and Nicklaus North Golf Course boast views so stunning that it may be difficult to keep your eye on the ball. Local companies such as Sewell's Marina (page 195) can take you on a sea safari or—if you're up to the job of captain—rent you a boat to go exploring on your own. As for catching some powder in the summertime, Whistler Blackcomb's Horstman Glacier stays open for intermediate and advanced skiers and riders through July.—*S.R.*

6 Winter Games Sites

Relive exciting moments from the 2010 Winter Games with a tour of Olympic and Paralympic venues, either by yourself or guided by Enjoy Tour and Travel (page 196). Canada Hockey Place, otherwise known as GM Place (page 192), is home to our NHL team, the Canucks, and sits alongside BC Place (page 192). Up on Cypress Mountain (page 196), take in the view of the Vancouver Convention Centre. To the east is the Pacific Coliseum, the showcase for figure skating. Experience your own medal-worthy moment with a lap around the Richmond Olympic Oval (page 193), open to all levels of fitness after the Games. In Whistler, follow the path of gold-medal bobsledders with a guided tour of the Sliding Centre and Olympic/Paralympic Park.—*J.P.*



7 Sports Teams

You'll hear the hoots and hollers of Vancouver Canucks (page 189) fans until regular-season games wrap up Apr. 10—but if the team advances to the Stanley Cup playoffs, 'Nucks fever can last into June. September marks the start of the 2011 game season for both the Canucks and the Vancouver Giants (page 189), the city's major junior hockey team. Football fans root for the BC Lions (Jun. to Nov.), and the Vancouver Canadians play the ol' ball game at historic Nat Bailey Stadium (Jun. to Sep.). The Vancouver Whitecaps don their cleats this summer (Apr. to Oct.) before beginning their major-league soccer career in 2011.—*K.U.*

8 Day Trips

Head to Squamish and Whistler for outdoor activities aplenty, including windsurfing, mountain biking and canoeing. Hop aboard BC Ferries (page 208) for a trip to Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia and home to our historic parliament buildings. A skip-and-a-jump between Vancouver and Vancouver Island are the Gulf Islands, and there's no shortage of

charming getaways on Salt Spring, Galiano and Mayne islands. The Fraser Valley is the perfect spot to grab farm-fresh cheese and u-pick raspberries. The province's wine region can be found in the Okanagan, known for its dry, sunny climate. South of the border is Seattle, home to rock legends Nirvana and Jimi Hendrix, as well as the iconic Space Needle.—*J.P.*



Hikers pause to take in the view of the mountains near Whistler

PHOTOS: (ABOVE) BY JEFF VINNICK COURTESY VANCOUVER CANUCKS. (L) BY TOM RYAN COURTESY TOURISM BC

9 Restaurants

Vancouver boasts world-class cuisine, but many of our best restaurants are rented out or booked solid during the 2010 Winter Games. Return in the warmer months, then, for an eating-and-drinking tour of the city featuring summer's cornucopia of fresh local produce and sun-kissed patios with breathtaking views. Your stomach will thank you.—*S.R.*

10 Sunshine

Contrary to popular belief, it doesn't always rain in Vancouver. But July and August are especially bright for sun worshippers. **W**



The seaside neighbourhood of Yaletown, with Burrard Bridge in the background

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