





walk this way

Earn your “tree legs”
on the Greenheart
Canopy Walkway

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PHOTOS BY KK LAW

Tarzan would have given up his vines if he'd been able to navigate the forest on a canopy walkway—though it may have taken him a while to find his “tree legs.” Tottering along the aerial bridges of the Greenheart Canopy Walkway at UBC Botanical Garden is a unique experience, a cross between flying and sailing. You don't have to be a daredevil to enjoy this eco-attraction, which opened last year, but you sure can't be afraid of heights: the 308-m (1,010-ft) walkway tops out at more than 17.5 m (57 ft) off the ground.

“Treehugger” technology, using interlaced steel cables, keeps the trees unharmed, ensuring that nails and bolts don’t have to be used to attach spans and platforms



The Greenheart Conservation Company constructed the walkway using “Treehugger” technology, a system of interlaced steel cables that keeps the trees unharmed; neither nails nor bolts have to be used to attach spans and platforms. This Canadian company constructs nature-based attractions, including walkways and flightlines, all around the world, capitalizing on the popularity of eco-tourism—and there’s nowhere greener than Vancouver.

The city’s rainforest climate provides unique opportunities to view moss, lichen and other plants. From high in the forest canopy, it’s possible to see unusual plants and insects and birds such as eagles and woodpeckers. At night, the occasional flying squirrel swoops past, seeming to defy the law of gravity. Six guides, each with a different specialty, have a wealth of knowledge about everything from varieties of tree bark to edible plants to sounds made by eagles. (They’re louder than you might guess.)

The nine bridges and eight viewing platforms are popular with kids, who sometimes ignore the guides’ admonitions and run and jump, trying their hardest to overturn the bridges. But all such efforts are in vain. Although the undulating

bridges may feel as unstable as a tiny ship tossed on the rolling seas, they’ve been tested extensively. Even a group of burly fire fighters all leaning in the same direction were unable to flip any.

The walkway is also popular with older folks, who enjoy the serenity of the green space, and very young children, who are welcome as long as they can walk on their own or are secured in a Snuggli. Plans are underway for the walkway

The licorice fern likes to grow on moss-covered trees and rocks




UBC Botanical Garden is filled with quiet, peaceful spots, so bring a book—or, better yet, a picnic lunch—and prepare to spend a few hours relaxing in the great outdoors



to accommodate wheelchairs in the near future, so everyone will have the chance to manoeuvre amongst the treetops.

The Greenheart Canopy Walkway is tucked away inside UBC Botanical Garden (page 72), which is worth a visit all on its own. The gorgeous garden, in operation since 1916, covers about 44 ha (110 acres) and features more than 8,000 different plants.

For a uniquely West Coast day trip, pack a picnic lunch, then spend the morning admiring the breathtaking First Nations artwork in the Museum of Anthropology at UBC (page 77). In the afternoon, stroll through the garden until you find the perfect sunny spot to enjoy an al fresco meal. Cap off the day with a canopy walkway adventure. Just be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes and pack a spare memory card for your camera. This is one day you'll want to remember—but with photos, not blisters.

The Greenheart Canopy Walkway is located within the David C. Lam Asian Garden in UBC Botanical Garden. For more information, including driving directions, rates and hours of operation, visit www.greenheartcanopywalkway.com or call toll-free 1-888-755-3227. 

FURTHER FOREST ADVENTURES

To see more of the Pacific Northwest's beautiful forests, visit Stanley Park (page 72). This 400-ha (1,000-acre) green space in the heart of the city is surrounded by a picturesque seawall that's perfect for walking, biking or blading. The popular park was damaged by bitter winter storms a few years ago, but it's still bursting with gorgeous old trees. Or visit Pacific Spirit Regional Park (page 68), which is frequented by walkers of both the two-legged and four-legged varieties, as well as cyclists.

For an adrenaline-fuelled forest adventure, head to the Capilano Suspension Bridge (page 63) in North Vancouver. Its Treetops Adventure attraction features seven suspension bridges that take you high into the forest canopy.