Top 5 sights in... *Vancouver*

Start an Alaska cruise with a stay in the west coast's biggest city – a Fifa World Cup host next summer. **Russell Higham** reports

1 FLIGHT-SEEING

Cruise ships dock at Canada Place in the heart of downtown, just across from the Fairmont Waterfront hotel, whose Arc bar and restaurant offers stunning views of seaplanes departing for scenic flight-seeing tours. Harbour Air's seaplane tours show the city from above – the best way to appreciate how mountains, ocean, green spaces and skyscrapers all meet here – along with its neighbouring islands. A 30-minute Classic Panorama tour (*pictured*) costs from £85.

2 CAPILANO SUSPENSION BRIDGE

Take one of the free shuttle buses from outside the Fairmont to the Capilano Suspension Bridge – a 70m-high, 137m-long footbridge – and on to the hiking trails and ski slopes of Grouse Mountain on the city's northern outskirts.

3 STANLEY PARK

Grab a bike from Cycle City Tours and join a guided ride around Stanley Park, the city's 1,000-acre 'green heart'. Its six-mile seawall – part of a 17-mile 'greenway' that is the longest uninterrupted waterfront path in the world – is a hotspot for walkers, joggers and cyclists thanks to its ocean views. But the park also has a fascinating First Nations history, with tours exploring the area's Shíshálh (Coast Salish) and Squamish cultures.

4 GRANVILLE ISLAND

Take one of False Creek Ferries' water-buses over to Granville Island, a fashionable waterside entertainment district with art galleries, theatres and an artisan food and craft market. It's also home to Sea Vancouver, whose open-air Zodiac boat tours offer a chance to spot some of the abundant local wildlife, including bald eagles and harbour seals.

5 GASTOWN

To appreciate Vancouver's Victorian architecture, head to Gastown. It's home to the famous whistling steam clock and adjacent to North America's second-largest Chinatown. Other neighbourhoods include Kitsilano for stylish shopping and Mount Pleasant, where two restaurants – Burdock & Co and Published on Main – have been awarded stars in Vancouver's Michelin Guide.