

# 48 HOURS

## IN VICTORIA

**Nikki Bayley  
champions  
the charms  
of British  
Columbia's  
capital**

**F**or years, sunny Victoria was known for its honeymooners and retirees. However, thanks to a booming tech industry, increasingly youthful population and vibrant craft beer and cocktail scene, it is fast becoming one of Canada's must-visit destinations.

Just a 30-minute float-plane journey with Harbour Air or helicopter trip with Helijet from downtown Vancouver (or rather longer scenic bus and ferry trip), Victoria dazzles with stunning gardens and a world-class museum, and offers plenty of First Nations history and culture alongside its colonial past as a Hudson's Bay Company trading post. Add in jaw-dropping natural beauty, pristine Edwardian and Victorian architecture plus a small-town friendliness – despite its provincial capital status –



**Victoria dazzles with stunning gardens and a world-class museum, and offers plenty of First Nations history**

and you have the makings of a fun-packed two-day stay.

### ► DAY ONE

**09.30:** It's hard to say which Victoria loves more: small-batch coffee roasters or craft breweries. It's too early to check out the latter, so try the delicious brews and doughnuts on offer at Discovery Coffee. [discoverycoffee.com](http://discoverycoffee.com)

**10.15:** Arrive early to get kitted out for a two-hour bike trip around the city with the ultra-friendly crew at Pedaler tours. The Castle, Hoods and Legends tour ticks off all the must-sees from historic Chinatown and Craigdarroch Castle to Beacon Hill Park. Suitable for all fitness levels, the pedal-averse can upgrade to an electric bike. [thepedaler.ca](http://thepedaler.ca)

**12.30:** After all that pedalling, you've earned a treat. Hop on board one of the cute H2O water taxis that chug around the harbour and head for Fisherman's Wharf. There you can snap photos of the harbour seals and sample the city's best fish and chips or steamed dungeness crab at Barb's. [barbsfishandchips.com](http://barbsfishandchips.com) ➔

### TOP TIP

The Canadian dollar has hit a 13-year low, meaning clients' sterling will stretch further than usual

➔ **14.00:** Take a stroll along the waterfront, or catch the water taxi to the Steamship Terminal for the Royal BC Museum, the jewel in Victoria's cultural crown. There's plenty to enjoy here, including an Imax cinema, wonderfully realised natural history galleries – complete with sounds and smells – and a First Nations exhibit with soaring totems, art, and language posts that take in life before and after European contact.  
[royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

**16.00:** Victoria is known as the most English city in Canada, so indulge in one of its great traditions, afternoon tea. If money is no object, take it at the Fairmont Empress Hotel in the tea lobby surrounded by chintz and potted palms for £40, or you could



### Victoria is the most English city in Canada, so indulge in one of its great traditions, afternoon tea

try a more affordable version at Venus Sophia for £17.

**17.00:** The city's historic Chinatown is Canada's oldest, and home to the remarkable Silk Road Tea, where you can take a complimentary tea workshop or visit its basement spa for tea-infused treatments.  
[silkroadteastore.com](http://silkroadteastore.com)

**19.00:** After a break at your hotel, it's time to see why Victoria's dining scene is on foodies' radars with a visit to the much-fêted Little Jumbo for its piled-high, house-made charcuterie boards and innovative cocktails. If fancy isn't your style, then try North 48 for its elevated take on comfort food classics – the sous-vide meatloaf and mashed potato is plate-lickingly wonderful.  
[littlejumbo.ca/northfortyeight.com](http://littlejumbo.ca/northfortyeight.com)

#### DAY TWO

**09.00:** It's time to get out on the water and see some of those natural wonders for which BC is famous. Between May and October, you can see transient and resident pods of orcas along with minke, grey and humpback whales. Orca Spirit (previously Seacoast) has been in business for two decades and

offers three-hour expeditions by Zodiac or covered boat.  
[orcaspire.com](http://orcaspire.com)

**12.30:** After a morning scanning the horizon for whale tails, it's time for lunch. Be virtuous at Nourish, where healthy eating is a delight, or check out one of the city's most popular brewpubs, Canoe, which serves up a tempting pub-food menu of local, sustainable and organic treats. Wash it down with one of its hand-crafted beers made from Canadian malt and local hops.

[nourishkitchen.ca/canoebrewpub.com](http://nourishkitchen.ca/canoebrewpub.com)

**14.00:** If you're in the mood for more sightseeing, there's no better way to explore than by scooter. Rent one for the afternoon at Cycle BC ➔

## 5 OF THE BEST

### VANCOUVER ISLAND ACTIVITIES

#### Bear spotting

Bear tours give visitors the opportunity to spot the island's black bears and grizzlies in the nearby coastal inlets of the mainland

#### Fishing

The island's Campbell River is dubbed the 'salmon fishing capital of the world', but there are also fly and saltwater-fishing options

#### Wine tasting

Small family-run vineyards can be found in the Cowichan and Comox valleys, the Saanich Peninsula and the Gulf Islands

#### Golf

Clients can pick from 40 venues across the island, from mountain-top fairways to coastal courses

#### Surfing

West-coast resort Tofino is the top spot for waves, with surf schools for learners



10.15: City bike tour



14.00: Royal BC Museum



09.00: Whale watching



16.00: Fairmont Empress Hotel



19.00: Little Jumbo

A new perspective...

## CANADA'S ROCKY MOUNTAINEER & ALASKA CRUISE

❖ NINE DAYS FROM £2,199PP

❖ SIXTEEN DAYS INCLUDING A SEVEN NIGHT FULL-BOARD ALASKA CRUISE FROM £3,049PP

❖ PRICE INCLUDES RETURN FLIGHTS, TRANSFERS, ACCOMMODATION, MANY GUIDED EXCURSIONS AND THE SERVICES OF A RIVIERA TRAVEL TOUR MANAGER

FOR FURTHER INFO OR TO BOOK, CALL:

**01283 744370** OR BOOK ONLINE:

[WWW.RIVIERATRAVEL.CO.UK/AGENTS](http://WWW.RIVIERATRAVEL.CO.UK/AGENTS)

**RIVIERA TRAVEL**





## SAVE

### Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe

A five-minute walk from town, the Delta has the city's best beer gardens with stunning harbour views.

Rooms are modern, and there's a large pool, sun terrace and Jacuzzi. Rooms start at £70.

[deltahotels.com](http://deltahotels.com)

## SPEND

### The Magnolia

Superb location, friendly staff and spacious contemporary rooms make this a popular choice. Its spa is one of the best in the city. Rooms start at £100.

[magnoliahotel.com](http://magnoliahotel.com)

## SPLURGE

### Abigail's Hotel

A luxury adult-only B&B in a three-storey (no lift), 23-room Tudor-style mansion bristling with swagged drapes, fireplaces and jetted tubs. Rooms start at £125.

[abigailshotel.com](http://abigailshotel.com)

➔ and head along the coast on Dallas Road; the views are glorious and you can stop off along the way for a walk on one of the secluded beaches. If scooters aren't your thing, you can always go shopping. For art and fashion, try Trounce Alley, with its pretty twinkling lights strung overhead, or check out Bastion Square, the former site of Fort Victoria, for its summer market, pop-up events and artisan craftspeople. If you're after big-name stores, the Bay Centre in the heart of town has more than 90 shops.

[victoria.cyclebc.ca](http://victoria.cyclebc.ca)

**17.00:** Pop into Bodega to take advantage of its 3pm-6pm happy hour, when sherry costs \$5 a glass and complimentary pintxos are served.

[bodegabar.ca](http://bodegabar.ca)



**Watch out for the bar staff's fake snakes and spiders, which can make an unexpected appearance at your table**

**18.30:** Try something totally different at the Interactivity Board Game Cafe, where you can play more than 800 games from around the world for a \$5 entrance fee. Experts are on hand to help you find cooler versions of your favourite game. The cafe menu includes candy bowls, milkshakes and 30 flavours of home-made ice cream.

Open till midnight, it's not just for kids. [ibgcafe.com](http://ibgcafe.com)

**20.00:** 'Winner can buy dinner' – try Veneto, with its famous 'secret burger' and delicious sharing plates. It also has a fantastic cocktail menu, with the option to 'spin the wheel' to get a handcrafted drink mixed just for you. [venetodining.com](http://venetodining.com)

**22.00:** Stop for a late drink at one of the city's institutions, Big Bad John's, a hillbilly hideaway with peanut shells on the floor, loud music and memorabilia from around the world. Watch out for the fake snakes and spiders that the mischievous bar staff have on strings, which can make an unexpected appearance at your table. [strathconahotel.com](http://strathconahotel.com)



18.30: Interactivity Board Game Cafe



12.30: Canoe



14.00: Cycle BC



22.00: Big Bad John's