

Assignment: Vancouver

Tourism Vancouver's 2014 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 US 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 the continent’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 the some of the other “moo-ving” 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 Indian bands – 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, it's 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, sparks-up.

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. A few bleary-eyed students show up. There are now more than 46,000 students at the verdant waterfront campus.

1910: The 13-story 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 – moves 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. It still looks like it should be in Gotham City.

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.

Story idea

Even locals often regard Vancouver as a “new city” lacking any discernible history. But as the timeline above shows, the region has a colourful past – and much of it still exists for 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.

Plus: *Take pictures while you walk and post them “live” for your Twitter followers.*

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. Already recognised as having the smallest carbon footprint of any major city in North America, Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson recently 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 2011 report by the Economist Intelligence Unit. The study, which also placed the city second in North America after San Francisco, 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 supports sustainable fishing practices, ensuring that the seafood on your restaurant table has been raised, sourced and supplied in an environmentally sound manner. Check menus for Ocean Wise designations and peruse the organization's website for a list of participating establishments and a free downloadable iPhone app.

Story idea

Dozens of restaurants in Vancouver alone have signed on to the Ocean Wise conservation initiative. Consider a story highlighting the success of the program and how it has expanded nationwide to include more than 3,000 participants. Interview local chef Robert Clark from C Restaurant, a co-founder of the program, and hear his passion for a sustainable seafood industry. And don't forget to recommend the recently published Ocean Wise Cookbook to your readers.

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 Paralympic 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 recently expanded its commitment to cyclists by creating popular new downtown bike lanes on 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.

Extra!

Opened in 2009, the Vancouver Convention Centre's West Building expansion is one of the greenest new structures in Canada. A designated LEED Platinum building, 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 eye-popping public art and is the permanent outdoor home of the 2010 Olympic Cauldron – which is reignited 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 the Fairmont Pacific Rim (www.fairmont.com/pacificrim), Fairmont Waterfront (www.fairmont.com/waterfront), Hyatt Regency Vancouver (www.vancouver.hyatt.com) and Four Seasons Vancouver (www.fourseasons.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 sources herbs from its own rooftop garden, which also includes a honeybee apiary.

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.stanleyparkeecology.ca); an excursion with Vancouver Eco Tours (www.vancouverecotours.com); a visit to the Capilano River Hatchery; a kayak tour with Ecomarine Ocean Kayak (www.ecomarine.com); and dinner in an Ocean Wise restaurant. And don't miss Grouse Mountain's Eye of the Wind (www.grousemountain.com), a 65-metre (215 foot) wind turbine that generates electricity and offers a lift-accessed viewing pod with spectacular views over the mountains and cityscape.

HONOURING VANCOUVER

Mercer Human Resource Consulting (February 2014)

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 221 cities worldwide.

Travel Weekly (December 2013)

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

Lonely Planet (December 2013)

Vancouver placed 7th on *Lonely Planet's* Best Cities to Visit on the **2014 "Best in Travel"** list.

Conde Nast Traveler (October 2013)

Vancouver was ranked 13th by *Conde Nast* readers on a list of the top 25 cities to visit. Vancouver beat out heavyweights Sydney, Paris and Venice. Cities were scored on ambience, friendliness, culture and sites, restaurants, lodging and shopping. Vancouver was previously named "Best City in the Americas" by *Conde Nast Traveler* readers in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2010.

The Economist (August 2013) 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 2013)

Vancouver was recognized by the Canadian travel agent community as the top destination in Canada, winning the 2013 Agents' Choice Award: *Best City/Town in Canada*.

Hotels.com (November 2013)

Vancouver ranked 8th in a poll recognizing taxis in popular city destinations. This poll was based on safety, value, knowledge of area, quality and friendliness of the taxis and their drivers.

Travel + Escape (April 2013)

Vancouver was named 3rd **Best Street Food City** in North America, placing behind Portland and Austin, respectively. This can be credited towards the city's booming food truck industry that began in 2010, and has exploded in recent years.

Travel + Leisure magazine (2013)

Vancouver's 1,000 acre Stanley Park was included on *Travel + Leisure* magazine's list of world's most beautiful city parks.

National Geographic magazine (2013)

Vancouver was named one of *National Geographic* magazine's "Top 10 Beach Cities" alongside Sydney, Honolulu, Barcelona, Rio, Nice, Cape Town, Miami, Tel Aviv and Santa Monica.

Trip Advisor (July 2013)

Vancouver's crown jewel, Stanley Park, was named best urban park in the world by travel website TripAdvisor.com.

Travel + Leisure Magazine (July 2013)

Vancouver was ranked #9 on a Top 10 list of top destination cities in Canada and the United States.

VANCOUVER: WHO'S COMING?

Metro Vancouver received 8.4 million overnight visitors in 2010, including 5.2 million from within Canada, 1.9 million from the U.S., 723,000 from the Asia-Pacific region and 443,000 from Europe. Additional markets accounted for 117,000 visitors. The fastest growing markets included China, Mexico, Brazil and Australia. 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.

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

Vancouver is a key conference destination, particularly following the 2009 expansion to the city's waterfront Convention Centre (www.vancouverconventioncentre.com). The new structure tripled the centre's size: it now covers 1.1 million square feet and has 72 meeting rooms in two main

buildings: the iconic Canada Place and the dramatic new grass-roofed West Building.

In 2011, the city enjoyed its strongest ever convention year, filling more than 225,000 hotel rooms and hosting 25 citywide conventions. Delegates spent an estimated \$92.6 million in the city, the average stay was over three days and convention business generated almost \$1 billion for the Metro Vancouver economy.

CRUISES

Just over 663,000 revenue passengers on 199 sailings passed through Port Metro Vancouver (www.portmetrovancover.com) facilities in 2011, a 15 percent rise over 2010. In 2010, cruise ship passengers spent almost \$70 million in the region, contributing to an economic impact of more than \$121 million.

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. Refurbished and upgraded in 1995, Ballantyne Pier – at 655 Centennial Road – is about one kilometre (half-mile) east. There's a free shuttle between the two facilities. The London-based Berlitz travel publishing company has named Port Metro Vancouver as North America's most passenger-friendly cruise facility.

Extra!

Canada Place hosts one of the country's largest Canada Day celebrations every July 1st, 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 US and across Canada.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (YVR)

Celebrating its 80th birthday in 2011, YVR (www.yvr.com) is Western Canada's largest airport and the country's second busiest. A gateway for Europe, North America and the Asia Pacific region, there are daily flights to and from every continent. Since 1992, when the Vancouver Airport Authority assumed operational responsibility, passenger traffic has increased more than 78 per cent and air cargo has increased nearly 57 per cent. In 2010, the airport welcomed 16.8 million passengers. YVR was named North America's Best Airport at the 2013 World Airport Awards – for the fourth year running.

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

Regarded by locals and seasoned international travellers as one of the world's most attractive airports, YVR is home to a striking art collection. Consider a "lay-over story" covering the airport's art trail for visitors, perhaps including an interview or two with artists represented in the collection and some comments from passengers admiring the art around the facility. Highlights include totem poles, a giant wave-patterned window installation and a huge, kid-friendly bronze Haida canoe produced by Bill Reid. The airport is also home to two satellite exhibits of the Vancouver Aquarium. 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.

Plus: *Make a short video of the intricate, multifaceted Bill Reid statue, including interviews with passengers. It's a fascinating piece of artwork and also the number one meeting place at the airport.*

Routes and carriers: YVR's main carriers are Air Canada (www.aircanada.com) and Westjet (www.westjet.com), while Pacific Coastal Airlines (www.pacificcoastal.com) is an important regional operator. More than 65 other carriers use the airport, servicing 121 destinations in Canada and beyond.

Extra!

The three most popular destinations served by YVR are Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton.

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 newest 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, and Toronto on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The entire journey takes three days and the train offers two service classes: Economy and Sleeper Touring.

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 Calgary, stopping in Kamloops and Banff; "Journey through the Clouds" goes from Vancouver to Jasper, stopping in Kamloops; "Rainforest to Gold Rush" goes from Whistler to Jasper, stopping in Quesnel; and the "Whistler Sea to Sky Climb" goes from Vancouver to Whistler.

Amtrak (www.amtrakcascades.com): The US 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 (www.westcoastexpress.com): 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 (www.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 Seattle.

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 US, 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 also known as the Sea to Sky Highway for its spectacular mountain and waterfront views. The route also includes several attractions, such as 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 36 vessels and 47 ports of call. It carries more than 20 million passengers and eight million vehicles annually. Reservations are available and recommended, especially on mainland to Vancouver Island routes. Wi-Fi was recently rolled out on select services, while the company also opened 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), SeaAir Seaplanes (www.seairseaplanes.com) and Whistler Air (www.whistlerair.ca).

Alternatively, Helijet International (www.helijet.com) offers regular helicopter services between Vancouver and Victoria. The company recently welcomed its two-millionth passenger.

GETTING AROUND

Vancouver's road network is relatively easy to navigate and traffic is rarely a challenge. Cars are not required in the downtown core, where most people move around using 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. Its fare system allows passengers to purchase tickets and transfer across the entire network for up to 90 minutes. FareSaver ticket books (from \$21) are

available at retail outlets across the city, along with all-zone one-day passes (\$9) that are popular with visitors.

The transit system is divided into three zones, covering Vancouver and many of its suburbs. Regular fares are one zone \$2.50, two zones \$3.75 and three zones \$5.00. Concessions are available for seniors and school students. After 6.30 p.m. weekdays and throughout weekends and public holidays, the maximum fare is \$2.50 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 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 \$3.25.

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.

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; 604-683-6666)
- 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 and the Sutton Place Hotel.

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. Peddlers 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 was actually the third Hotel Vancouver, one of a string of

chateau-style hotels built across Canada. From here, stroll west along Georgia Street, passing Christ Church Cathedral (nip 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 structure. Housing a hotel on the bottom and pricey condos on the top, its 61-floors reach 201 metres (659 feet). Stop to check out the alfresco art installation alongside – it's the Offsite exhibit space of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Double back along Georgia to Burrard Street. Turn left onto Burrard and walk towards the mountains. At the intersection with Hasting Street, you'll find Vancouver's favourite art deco structure. The Marine Building is elaborately adorned with aquatic motifs on the outside and has a lovely interior from a bygone age of elaborate ornamentation. Nip inside for quick 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. And don't worry about getting lost – if your feet are suddenly wet, it means you've walked too far and it's time to turn back.

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, while 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 chatty coffee shop and several tempting craft studios.

Continue east, rejoin Cartwright Street and head to the eastern tip of the Island. You'll find a boutique hotel with its own brewery and a preserved crane that recalls the area's industrial past. 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 is 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 vistas. 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 views.

Start at the West Georgia Street entrance of the park, following the seawall as it curves around Coal Harbour past the Tudoresque 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 picture-perfect Brockton Point Lighthouse; and the *Girl in a Wetsuit* statue, shivering in the water 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, pulling up a log to sit and watch the ocean panorama, before continuing on to Second Beach. 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 warm and 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 \$130, 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 www.tourismvancouver.com/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.bcferries.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

- BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (www.bccpd.bc.ca)
- BC Lions Society for Children with Disabilities (www.lionsbc.ca)

- BC Mobility Opportunities Society (www.bcmos.org)
- British Columbia Paraplegic Association (www.bcpara.org)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (www.cniib.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 as its mother tongue, while the most recent census (2011) also revealed that 25 per cent consider Chinese as 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, architecture and engineering. The number of these jobs has more than doubled in the past 20 years. This 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 per cent 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

Consider a summer story on Chinatown's bustling weekend night market (May to September, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights). Sample the array of hawker food and putter among the stalls for the best cheap-and-cheerful shopping in town.

Plus

The sights and sounds of Chinatown are a major lure. Consider making an audio slideshow combining recorded background sounds with colourful photos. You could focus on the night 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 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.

Now 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-style Chinese 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 July 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. And consider Tweeting your food crawl throughout the day.

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.greeksummerfest.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 rad hangouts like Café Calabria and Caffé Roma to hipster haunts such as 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

The Vancouver region has been the ancestral home to dozens of First Nations communities for thousands of years and their influence can be seen throughout the city. 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 (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 the Listel Hotel (www.thelistelhotel.com) which has many First Nations artworks on display; having dinner at the Salmon and Bannock bistro (www.salmonandbannock.net); and checking out some of the attractions listed above.

LGBT

By the time Canada legalized same-sex marriage in 2005, Vancouver was already the country's number one destination for LGBT 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 LGBT 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 vibrant 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. This culminated in British Columbia legalizing 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.

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 and rainbow-flag window decals. 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 LGBT 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 carnivalesque atmosphere and to celebrate the fact that the city’s GLBT 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 stores and checking out colourful street performers. Reflecting Vancouver’s burgeoning cosmopolitanism, Robson is also home to dozens of authentic ethnic restaurants, especially at its western end, where Korean and Japanese language students pack the busy noodle shops and sushi bars.

***Story:** 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 GLBT 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 Starbucks outlets 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:** Cover the West End by 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 bars. But it's the district's dining scene that has really taken off in recent years. One of Vancouver's leading culinary hotspots, cutting edge new restaurants open in Gastown all the time, pioneering new movements in the city's already exciting restaurant scene – stroll the streets here for unique sushi, charcuterie, Pacific Northwest, Asian fusion, cool cocktail bars and craft beer pubs, and hipster diner experiences.

Story: *Delve into the area's history by day on a walking tour run by the Architectural Institute of BC (www.aibc.ca)...then come back at night for a self-directed pub crawl of the area's best watering holes.*

CHINATOWN

It's the third-largest Chinatown in North America and dripping with historic reminders of the immigrants that helped build the province from the mid-18th-century onwards – even before Vancouver was officially a city. Lining 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 steam-shrouded summer night market 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: *Compare the charms of old-school Chinatown with the bustle of Richmond, often regarded as a modern-day version of the original Chinese district.*

YALETOWN

An old redbrick rail terminal and warehouse district transformed in the early 1990s into swanky condo towers, lounge bars and chichi boutiques, pedestrian-friendly Yaletown is Vancouver's "little Soho." 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 sleepover.

Story: *Explore the fine dining options on the streets of Yaletown, including Blue Water Café (www.bluewatercafe.net), Glowbal Grill Steak & Satay (www.glowbalgroup.com), Hapa Izakaya Yaletown (www.hapaizakaya.com) and Brix Restaurant & Wine Bar (www.brixvancouver.com). Include some 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 is the site of the 2010 Olympic Village (now a residential development). Continue along the seawall here for a wonderful urban walk, combining waterfront vistas, public art-

works 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: *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 Edible Canada (www.ediblecanada.com)*

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 spines 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.

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 now 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 still-vibrant Italian coffee shops to catch a European soccer game.

Story: *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 bustling enclave 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 gentle browsing.

Story: 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. Home to Kitsilano Beach, Vanier Park, Vancouver's largest outdoor pool and a 4th Avenue thoroughfare of browsable shops and popular eateries, Kits is one of the city's best summertime haunts.

Story: 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.

Story: 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, Beatty Biodiversity Museum and Belkin Gallery. In addition there are 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 even has its own naturist beach. Check out www.ubc.ca for more information on campus attractions and activities.

Story: 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 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.capbridge.com), Grouse Mountain (www.grousemountain.com) and Deep Cove, a tranquil, tree-lined inlet favoured by kayakers of all skill levels.

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 curious mix of old cottages and multi-million dollar homes, West Van's attractions include the seawall stroll to Dundarave Pier, Lighthouse Park's verdant trails and Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com), the venue for freestyle skiing and snowboarding at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Story: *Visitors alighting from the SeaBus at Lonsdale Quay used to spend their visit in the popular public market before heading back downtown. But now they take an extra hour or two to explore the rest of the Lower Lonsdale area. 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. Take a camera and tweet images as you walk.*

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. Now 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: *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 UNOFFICIAL REASONS TO VISIT 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. Sip an espresso, people watch and learn to speak Italian on The Drive.
5. Take the Aquabus (www.theaquabus.com) across False Creek to Granville Island (www.granvilleisland.com) or the SeaBus across Burrard Inlet to Lonsdale Quay.
6. Go skinny-dipping at Wreck Beach.
7. Sample the widest array of great sushi restaurants outside Japan.
8. Try some of British Columbia's lip-smacking craft beer...without leaving the city.
9. Take in a Jazz Vespers service at St. Andrews Wesley United Church (www.standrewswesleychurch.bc.ca).
10. Taste the region – from apples to blueberries – at one of several popular farmers' markets (www.eatlocal.org).

TEN GREAT VANCOUVER OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

1. Jog 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 Grouse Mountain.
6. Hit the mountain bike trails of the North Shore.
7. Kiteboard, windsurf, skimboard or paddle board off Kitsilano Beach.
8. Hike the trails of Mount Seymour...or come back in winter for skiing.
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 some cool public artworks nearby, including an orca installation by local lad Douglas Coupland.
2. Check out Christ Church Cathedral (www.cathedral.vancouver.bc.ca), a neo-Gothic treasure with lovely stained glass windows.
3. Peruse 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 verdant 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. Nip into the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver (www.fairmont.com/hotelvancouver), the city's grandest old-school hotel. In the lobby, there are historic photos and a copy of the menu en-

joyed 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 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 Edible Canada.
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 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. Discover lichens, mosses and some of the Lower Mainland's oldest cedar trees.
7. Select some reading material (or take in a free author reading) at the Vancouver Public Library (www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca).
8. Roll out your sleeping bag and overnight next to the beluga whale tank 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 cooking class at Dirty Apron Cooking School (www.dirtyapron.com).
5. Have dinner at Grouse Mountain's (www.grousemountain.com) Observatory Restaurant, overlooking the twinkling lights of downtown Vancouver.
6. Cosy up by a log and catch the best sunset in town at Stanley Park's Third Beach.
7. Paddle in Burnaby's Deer Lake together on a sunny summer afternoon.
8. Get in the mood with a Ritual of Two couples treatment at Fairmont Pacific Rim's Willow Stream Spa (www.fairmont.com/pacrim).
9. Wind down with a sunset dinner cruise (www.boatcruise.com) on the glassy waters between English Bay and Kitsilano.
10. In winter, hire skates and hit the 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, this is also the home of 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, complete with 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. Ogle the aquatic menagerie at the highly popular Vancouver Aquarium (www.vanaqua.org), where behind-the-scenes trainer tours 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.
10. Let you kids run, jump and tumble at the BC Sports Hall of Fame (www.bcsportshalloffame.com), where the 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.bardontheseach.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 carousel.
4. Enjoy some cool tunes at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival (www.coastaljazz.ca), held 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, and then have a late afternoon tea at The Fish House in Stanley Park (www.fishhousestanleypark.com).
6. Drive to Steveston in Richmond and stroll the restored fisherman's wharf, now teeming with gift stores and 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 that also has plenty of options for kids.
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. Peruse 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.

TEN “GREEN” 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 some 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 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. Enjoy the vast choices in 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 per cent of the resort’s energy needs) for an amazing view from a working power turbine (www.grousemountain.com).
 8. Take a guided tour of North Vancouver’s mountain, forest and seascape region in a green vehicle fuelled with vegetable oil (www.vancouvercotours.com).
 9. Take a walk on Vancouver’s new 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 QUIRKY THINGS TO DO IN VANCOUVER

1. Check out the darker side of the city’s history at the Vancouver Police Museum (www.vancouverpolicemuseum.ca), especially on a summer-time “Sins of the City” walking tour.
2. Join the locals for an evening of fun 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. Don your spurs and a ten-gallon hat for the Cloverdale Rodeo (www.cloverdalerodeo.com), a cowboy cavalcade of bareback, bronco and bull riding every May.
6. Dip into the city’s Portuguese side with a series of dances, picnics and cultural events in June’s Portuguese Heritage Month (www.portuguesemonth.com).

7. Eat your way around Vancouver while burning calories on a guided cycling tour of Vancouver's famous street food carts (www.cyclevancouver.com).
8. Witness one of the wackiest shows on offer at the annual Vancouver Fringe Festival (www.vancouverfringe.com) in September.
9. Take a train underground at the Britannia Mine Museum (www.britanniamuseum.ca).
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 about. Here are some 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: Interview the engineers behind Capilano's newest additions – 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. Most visitors coordinate time here around the animal feedings and exhibitions. And if you really want to treat the kids, consider a behind-the-scenes trainer tour or a sleepover beside the beluga tanks.

Story: 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-anointed “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. Recent additions to Grouse include a 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.

Story: *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 to Santa visits. Follow it with a snowshoe fondue tour. And don’t forget to end your story with a warming libation at the bar – if it’s clear, you’ll have a great view of the twinkling city 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: Check out one of Vancouver’s best alternative nightlife options: the quarterly FUSE event when the gallery opens late for live music and performance, cash bars and 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 new 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: *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 day one. Recently upgraded with new galleries and facilities, it includes hands-on exhibits, an Omnimax large-screen theatre and plenty of popular displays for kids of all ages. And if you manage to shake off the children, there are also regular adult nights when the facility takes on a nightclub ambiance.

***Story:** Make Science World a foundation of your story on Vancouver for visiting families, including as many of the city's top – and lesser-known – kidtastic 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:** 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.billredigallery.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 verdant growth 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 clothed in 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 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.stanleypark.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) 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 celebrated Fish House in Stanley Park (www.fishhousestanleypark.com), one of Vancouver's most popular seafood restaurants.

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 vistas 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 beady-eyed 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 dramatic new \$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 centre-piece 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

(www.parkandtilford.ca/pandtgardens.htm)

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 crawl 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.

Plus!

Create a Twitpic photo essay on the plants you discover on your weave through the city's green spaces.

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, 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. Among the old signs still visible on the city's streets are the Ovaltine Cafe (251 East Hastings Street); Only Seafoods Café (20 East Hastings Street); and the 2400 Court Motel (2400 Kingsway, Burnaby). Add this angle to your story: when Save-On-Meats (www.saveonmeats.ca) reopened as a cool diner in 2011, its owners spent a fortune refurbishing its landmark neon sign.

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 plethora 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 dis-used 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.

“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 horns 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.

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 their 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, 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, Portuguese Heritage Month, 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.
- *Chinatown Night Market* (mid-May to mid-September; www.vcma.shawbiz.ca): downtown smorgasbord of weekend food and market stalls.
- *Hyack Festival* (mid-May; www.hyack.bc.ca): New Westminster's annual parade and community showcase.
- *City of Bhangra* (www.cityofbhanga.com; late-May to June): nine-days of energetic dance and drums from local and international bhangra exponents.
- *Summer Night Market in Richmond* (June to mid-September; www.summernightmarket.com): giant weekend array of food stalls, market hawkers and live performance.

- *Portuguese Heritage Month* (June; www.portuguesemonth.com): multi-event celebration of Vancouver's Portuguese culture.
- *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 Comedy Fest* (February; www.comedyfest.com): growing showcase of new and established 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 in tents in Vanier Park.
- *Dancing on the Edge* (July; www.dancingonthedge.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.
- 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; www.queerfilmfest.ca): celebration of gay and lesbian movies.
- *Vancouver Latin American Film Festival* (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.tourismvancouver.com/dov): city restaurants offer specially-priced three course tasting menus, with popular parties, food-themed events and hotel packages also available.

- *Tales of the Cocktail* (February; www.talesofthecocktail.com): Vancouver edition of this highly successful showcase of tipples – expect tastings, classes and plenty of parties.
- Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival (late February; www.playhousewinefest.com): the city's main wine festival event.
- 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; www.chefstablesociety.com): head to Fisherman's Wharf near Granville Island for displays, cooking demonstrations and fresh-off-the-boat local 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.
- Eat! Vancouver (early June; www.eat-vancouver.com): three-day festival of food, chefs' competitions and great cooking.
- 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.
- *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.

- *Illuminares* (late July; www.publicdreams.org): magical community event inviting all to make and display their own homemade lanterns.
- *Pride Parade* (early August; www.vancouverpride.ca): giant annual street party, centrepiece of the city's ever-popular Pride Week.
- *Celebration of Light* fireworks competition (late July to early August; www.celebration-of-light.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 firework 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, a fairground, home and garden events, and live music and cultural shows are just part of this 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.
- *Peony Festival* (late May; www.vancouverchinesegarden.com): celebrating China's most prized flower 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.publicdreams.org): night time 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.

CHRISTMAS

- Vancouver Christmas Market (late November to Christmas Eve; www.vancouverchristmasmarket.com): German-inspired outdoor Yuletide market, held daily next to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.
- 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.rogerssantaclausparade.com): huge, family-friendly annual street celebration of Yuletide cheer – complete with the jolly red elf himself.

- Peak of Christmas at Grouse Mountain (November to December; www.grousemountain.com): smorgasbord of Christmas events, ranging from wandering reindeer to 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; www.vancouverparks.ca): sparkling Christmas light display in the city's giant downtown park.
- Carol Ships Parade of Lights (December; www.carolships.org): more than 80 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.vandusengarden.org): one of the city's favourite gardens is decked with a kaleidoscope of fairy lights every Christmas.
- Canyon Lights (December to January; www.capbridge.com): the forest and parkland around Capilano Suspension Bridge Park gain a festive sparkle with thousands of twinkling Christmas lights.

WINTER SPECIALS

- 24 Hours of Winter at Grouse Mountain (mid-February; www.grousemountain.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; www.secretlantern.org): six Vancouver neighbourhoods join together with their own mini lantern parades to welcome the middle of winter.
- *Winter Solstice Lantern Festival at Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden* (late December; www.vancouverchinesegarden.com): Chinese lantern parade to welcome 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. And 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

Local lad 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 has even produced his own quirky Vancouver “guidebook” called *City of Glass*.

William Gibson 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.

Extra!

The grand, Colosseum-shaped Vancouver Public Library (www.vpl.ca) is the best place in town to check out the city's literary bent. Opened in 1995, one of its most popular programs is the One Book One Vancouver campaign where the city becomes a giant book club focused on a single title written by a local author or with a local theme.

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 wannabeeism.
- *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 and the Terry Fox Memorial in front of BC Place Stadium. 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, some great concert venues and a pitch-perfect – and surprisingly diverse – array of festivals. Sarah McLachlan, Michael Bubl , Dan Mangan and Bif Naked call the city home, while Diana Krall hails from across the water on Vancouver Island and now lives 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.vancouverSymphony.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; 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 lures. 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 that's ripe for exploration, with hundreds of public, private and artist-run galleries available to chin-stroking visitors. The South Granville area is a wanderable strip of private galleries and it's 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.

In fact, the city is studded with public art, ranging from Douglas Coupland's *Digital Orca* outside the new Convention Centre building to the evocative silver boat shed on stilts on the Coal Harbour seawall. 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 has a long and enduring First Nations culture, a fact that 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 opened in May 2008. The gallery houses a permanent collection of work by 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 recently revamped 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. *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).
- 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

The B.C. film and television industry was home to a total of 246 productions in 2010, pumping more than \$1 billion into the local economy. The bulk of the productions are based in Metro Vancouver, the heart of "Hollywood North." B.C. is the third largest centre for film and television production in North America, behind Los Angeles and New York. The sector also supports 30,000 B.C. jobs, with more than 90 per cent of the production crews used hailing from British Columbia.

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 *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, *X-Men 3*, *Good Luck Chuck*, *Night at the Museum*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *I Love You Beth Cooper*, *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 (www.bcfilmcommission.com) 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. These include expedited permitting, equipment availability audits, location and studio co-ordination and post-production services.

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 the B.C. Film Commission 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 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
- Sutton Place Hotel and Gerard Lounge (www.suttonplace.com): Ben Affleck, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Kim Cattrall, Robert Pattinson, Dakota Fanning
- Wedgewood Hotel and Bacchus Lounge (www.wedgewoodhotel.com): REM, Goldie Hawn, Kurt Russell, Eddie Vedder, Ben Affleck, Harrison Ford

Restaurants & Bars

- Bar None (www.donnelygroup.ca): Vin Diesel, Ice Cube
- 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): Jennifer Anniston, Bill Clinton

Extra!

The Twilight Saga brought much attention to Vancouver, with the New Moon, Eclipse and Breaking Dawn movies shot in and around the city. The international spotlight was cast on places where the stars hung out, including the Sutton Place Hotel, Afterglow, Yaletown Brewing Co., and Blue Water Cafe, where the New Moon wrap party and Eclipse kick-off party took place.

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 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.
- Katherine 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.

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.

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 new Convention Centre expansion and its grass roof, for example.

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.

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.

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 new 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.

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 pull-up a log and watch the sky turn 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. Cates Park in Deep Cove and Whytecliff Park near Horseshoe Bay are popular diving sites.

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 tiny ferry 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 mini-ferries 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 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 lumber jack 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. 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 just a few minutes from downtown.

Venue for the 2010 Olympic snowboarding and freestyle skiing events, Cypress (www.cypressmountain.com) has the largest vertical drop 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 are the twin internationally renowned ski mountains of Whistler and Blackcomb (www.whistler.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. 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' new 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 Vancouver Olympic 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 new trends in winter activities for families is snow tubing and both Cypress Mountain (www.cypressmountain.com) and Mount Seymour (www.mountseymour.com) have stepped up to the plate. Cypress offers some heart-pumping, tree-flanked tracks for those who like to speed though 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.

Story idea

Consider a story on Grouse Mountain's Sno-Limo tours. Take a seat and let your guide do all the work of pushing you through the snow as you glide downhill on one of several dedicated runs while videoing your ride. Warm-up at the end of your trip with a fireside fondue in Grouse's city-view bistro.

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 recently redeveloped 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. 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).

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 RIDES

With its signature West Coast vistas 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) and West Coast Air (www.westcoastair.com).

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.reifelbirds sanctuary.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. Canadian Outback Adventures (www.canadianoutback.com) 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 West Vancouver's Sewell's Marina (www.sewellsmarina.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 the currents at 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 their booth within the Tourism Vancouver Visitor Centre. And don't miss taking in an event at the newly-renovated BC Place. The city's landmark stadium, it's one of the world's most technologically advanced sporting venues and it now has a sparkling new 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 and on the streets every 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 fami-

lies, 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 US 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 but ardently followed "unusual 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 entertaining all-women's league that's risen to prominence in Vancouver in recent years – see www.terminalcityrollergirls.com for information. And if you want to dive into one of the most popular winter sports among Canadians, check out curling via the Vancouver Curling Club (www.vancouvercurlingclub.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; www.sunrun.com): 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): cow-boy-themed events from wagon races to bucking broncos.

Alcan 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.

Vancouver International Triathlon (July; www.triseries.ca): swimming, cycling and running race centered on Spanish Banks.

Sea Wheeze lululemon Half-Marathon (August; www.seawheeze.com): popular new run 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 life-long 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 TOP 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 new Vancouver Convention Centre building.
- 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's newest 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. Partake of 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 taste-tripping dedication to local ingredients that encompasses everything from delectable seafood to carefully cultivated fruits and vegetables, visitors are spoiled 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 taste-tripping culinary showcases.

For the low-down on the scene the rest of the year, pick up copies of *Eat Magazine* and *City Food* for reviews, hot happenings and the latest scoops. And peruse a copy of *Vancouver* magazine's annual Restaurant Awards issue 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 Restaurant (www.hawksworthrestaurant.com); Fish House in Stanley Park's Karen Barnaby (www.fishhousestanleypark.com); Robert Clark from C Restaurant (www.crestaurant.com); Frank Pabst from Blue Water Cafe (www.bluewatercafe.net); Ned Bell from Yew Restaurant (www.yewrestaurant.com); and Vikram Vij from Vij's (www.vijs.ca). Among the new crop of rising stars are Maenam's Angus An (www.maenam.ca) and West's Quang Dang (www.westrestaurant.com). Vancouver is also the home of celebrated Iron Chef winner Rob Feenie.

Story: Interview top Vancouver chefs who have new cookbooks out. You could explore their approach to cooking, try out some of their recipes and give your readers a real taste of their menus.

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 to Salt Spring Island lamb and from Fraser Valley squash to Okanagan peaches.

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

Story: *Emulate the 100-Mile Diet by sourcing all your eats and drinks for your visit from restaurants and bars that source as locally as possible. Interview chefs and 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 ribeye, 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 five summer markets (see www.eatlocal.org) in Kitsilano, Kerrisdale, the West End, at Trout Lake and in front of the Pacific Central railway station. They typically run weekly from May or June to October, with an additional winter market at Nat Bailey Stadium 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: *Taste-trip around B.C. without even 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 salty 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 marine-noshing adventurer, hunt down the following regional specialities - and keep your eyes peeled for menus citing the Ocean Wise (www.oceanwise.ca) sustainable seafood initiative.

- **Geoduck** (a giant among clams that's pronounced "goo-ee-duck") is available at Sun Sui Wah Seafood Restaurant (www.sunsuiwah.com) 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 at Kirin Seafood Restaurant (www.kirinrestaurant.com) and – in May – at restaurants across the region
- West Coast oysters** are available at Joe Fortes Seafood & Chop House (www.joefortes.ca), Blue Water Cafe & Raw Bar (www.bluewatercafe.net) and Coast (www.glowbalgroup.com)

Story: *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 an established and expanding 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. Ask Vancouverites for tips – they're always happy to recommend their favourites.

Extra!

Vancouver's new street food scene isn't the only way to eat great grub al fresco. Chinatown's summer weekend night market is suffused with fresh-prepared dishes, while the Summer Night Market in Richmond offers an even bigger selection of steamy treats from chicken satay to barbecued squid and beyond.

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 taste-tripping tours aimed at visiting foodies. Edible Canada (www.ediblecanada.com) 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 Vancouver Foodie Tours (<http://foodietours.ca>) offer a range of options, from a Gastown beer tasting tour, to a Salt Spring Island adventure, 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. Classes are also offered by Quince (www.quince.ca) and the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts (www.picachef.com).

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

Dine Out Vancouver Festival (www.tourismvancouver.com/dov) 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 August's Chinatown Festival (www.vancouver-chinatown.com), where performances fuse with a wandering smorgasbord of great grub.

Extra!

Long table dining is a hugely popular trend in Vancouver with locals rubbing elbows and noshing – 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 California roll without hitting a good eatery. These include Gastown, a haven for the city's young up-and-coming chefs and bartenders; Yaletown, where the city's beautiful people come to feed at the hippest eateries; Robson Street, with more than 50 restaurants ranging from Korean noodle houses to super-chic movie star hangouts; Chinatown, with its dim sum haunts and fusion hotspots; Denman and Davie Streets, housing the city's best selection of good-value, mid-priced restaurants; Granville Island, with its fine dining and casual eateries sharing great city-and-mountain views; Kitsilano, complete with vegetarian haunts, quirky coffee houses and fine dining, especially along 4th Avenue; South Main, filled with small, eclectic joints, many catering to local veggies; and Commercial Drive, with its independent coffee bars and diverse ethnic eateries.

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 noodle scene, you’re just as likely to spot Japanese visitors as curious locals diving in taste-buds first.

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 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: 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) and talk to the Vancouver-based Japanese people you meet along the way. Consider adding a visit to Richmond to your story – or grabbing a hot dog at Japadog, a Vancouver street food phenomenon that recently opened an outlet in New York.

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.thekeferbar.com). And, echoing the streets of China, there are several great ways to eat al fresco Chinese treats, from street food carts to night markets.

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

Extra!

Each year, Vancouver magazine names what it considers the city’s top restaurants in a wide range of categories. In 2011, Best Formal Restaurant was Blue

Water Cafe (www.bluewatercafe.net); Best New Restaurant was Bao Bei Chinese Brasserie (www.bao-bei.ca); and the Restaurant of the Year was La Quercia (www.laquercia.ca).

DRINK VANCOUVER

Echoing its local food movement, Vancouverites have had a growing affinity for regional libations in recent years. It's safe to say that wine from the Okanagan Valley kick-started the trend, closely followed by smaller operators in the Fraser Valley, on Vancouver Island and in Richmond. Not to be outdone, regional beer makers have caught up in recent years and the city is now packed with lip-smacking brews from dozens of producers across the province. But if wine is the foundation of Vancouver drinking and beer has risen to join it, what's the next big thing? Craft distilleries are now popping up across the region and Vancouver is becoming a capital of great and innovative cocktail makers.

B.C.'S TOP TABLE 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 tipple 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.org.

Where to drink: *Time your visit for the annual Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival (www.playhousewinefest.com) or head to wine-loving local spots like Salt Tasting Room (www.salttastingroom.com), Brix Restaurant & Wine Bar (www.brixvancouver.com) or UVA Wine Bar (www.uvawinebar.ca).*

Story idea

With such a ubiquity of sushi joints and great Japanese restaurants, it was just a matter of time before the sake bar emerged in Vancouver. And who better to lead the charge than the city's most colourful sushi chef? Hidekazu Tojo attracted diners to his old Broadway restaurant for decades but when he made the move to a new venue along the street in early 2007, he added a new feature. Adventurous visitors who sit at the giant curved Maplewood sake bar can expect plenty of help on matching premium sake with what many regard as Vancouver's best sushi and sashimi. He also serves Canada's first craft sake, made right on Vancouver's Granville Island.

CRAFT BEERS

B.C. is one of North America's leading craft brewing beer regions, with distinctive, lip-smacking beverages in production at small facilities across the province - many of these beers are available at bars throughout Vancouver. Next time you're in one of Vancouver's pubs or restaurants, ask for a B.C. brew: you might find yourself enjoying a concoction by Crannog Ales from Sorrento, Old Yale from Chilliwack, Phillips Brewing from Victoria or Mt. Begbie from Revelstoke.

For really local and high quality beer, look for anything from Storm Brewing or Parallel 49 Brewing – two of Vancouver's best breweries. Many restaurants and pubs around Vancouver specialize in sporting local beer on tap. Craft Beer Market has nearly 140 craft beers to choose from, and the Gastown neighbourhood houses many of the city's finest craft beer bars. Vancouver also boasts several brewpubs, including Steamworks Brewing Company and The Yaletown Brewing Company.

Metro Vancouver is home to nearly 30 breweries (close to 40 by end of 2014), many of them with tasting rooms to sample and quaff a variety of unique ales and lagers. Popular tasting rooms include Brassneck Brewery, 33 Acres Brewing, Parallel 49, and Deep Cove Brewers. Several are clustered in the Mount Pleasant area, as well as in the East Village / Hastings Sunrise neighbourhood. The best way to experience the best of Vancouver beer, check out Vancouver Brewery Tours, who provides tours 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 Bitter Tasting Room (bittertastingroom.com); Craft Beer Market (vancouver.craftbeermarket.ca); Blackbird Public House (www.donnellygroup.ca); and The August Jack (theaugustjack.com). And look out for guest B.C. casks at many bars around the city.*

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. Plot a bar crawl around Gastown, one of the city’s leading nightlife areas and packed with unique watering holes. And if you fancy company, consider a guided craft beer tour of the area via Vancouver Food Tour (www.vancouverfoodtour.com)

COCKTAIL CULTURE

After its wine and beer revolutions, the latest tippable to hit the big time in Vancouver is the cocktail. A new generation of innovative young mixologists – each with a reverence for the classics as well as a drive to try something new --

has risen through the ranks of the city's bar scene, with many now opening their own bars (or transforming existing drinks menus) across the city.

Where to drink: *Pull up a stool at the bars in the Opus Hotel (www.opushotel.com), Pourhouse (www.pourhousevancouver.com); George Lounge (www.georgelounge.com), Yew Restaurant (www.yewrestaurant.com) and Hawksworth Restaurant (www.hawksworthrestaurant.com) or learn a few tricks of the trade at The Diamond (www.diamond.com). Time your visit well and you can also partake of the annual Tales of the Cocktail touring festival (www.talesofthecocktail.com).*

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); Ginger Sixty Two (www.ginger62.com); the Roxy (www.roxyvan.com); and Republic (www.donnelygroup.ca). The Granville Strip is also home to two of the city's beloved live music venues, the indie-inspired Commodore Ballroom (www.thecommodoreballroom.com) and the blues-loving Yale (www.theyale.ca).

GASTOWN

Luring a heady mix of hipsters and bar-hoppers to its historic brick-paved streets, the nightlife hotspots in Gastown include Post Modern Dance Bar (www.dhmbars.ca) for a pumping nightclub vibe; the Lamplighter (www.donnelygroup.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 club hotspots like Bar None (www.dhmbars.ca); the swanky bar of the Opus Hotel (www.opushotel.com); and the intimate Afterglow bar (www.glowbalgrill.com). Also check out the beautiful people at George Lounge (www.georgelounge.com) or join the microbrew beer crowd at the ever-popular Yaletown Brewing Company (www.drinkfreshbeer.com).

MAIN STREET

There are two key scenes on this major East Vancouver thoroughfare: the welcoming, hipster-loving neighbourhood bars in Mount Pleasant and the newly-emerging cool scene in and around the Chinatown end of Main, where hotspots

include the beer-tastic London Pub (www.thelondonpub.ca), cocktail-hugging Keefer Bar (www.thekeefebars.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 Blue Rodeo.

TEN SPORTING CHANCES

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.donnellygroup.ca)
- Charles Bar (www.thecharlesbar.ca)
- Yaletown Brewing Company (www.drinkfreshbeer.com)
- Steamworks (www.steamworks.com)
- Kingston Taphouse & Grill (www.kingstontaphouse.com)
- Mahony & Sons (www.mahonyandsons.com)
- Lions Pub (Terminal City Club; www.tctowerhotel.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 basket full 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. And 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, lululemon and Chapters, the area's largest department store is the Bay at the intersection of Granville and Georgia Streets. It recently opened its own in-store Topshop capsule, bringing the popular London brand to local shoppers. And just a block down Granville, you'll find Holt Renfrew, an all-Canadian department store focused on lux designer brands. 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, chichi Yaletown is stuffed with the city's most glamorous designer clothing stores. When the new Mini Cooper was launched in North America, it was no surprise when the company opened a swanky showroom here to speak directly to the people with the visual élan – and money – to embrace it. But Yaletown is not just about designer gear for beautiful young things; this is also the location of the Coastal People's Fine Art Gallery, showcasing some of the magnificent carvings, masks and jewellery of regional First Nations artisans (www.coastalpeoples.com).

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 hunger-busting 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 traveler 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 – look out for unique art galleries, swanky designers, top clothing boutiques 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. Centred on 4th Avenue, these stores include bookshops themed around travel or children, fashionable outdoor stores, yoga wear boutiques and specialty shops selling everything from artisan chocolates to swanky cooking utensils. 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. A browser's paradise, South Granville also has some superb restaurants and a live 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 Canadian Maple Delights (www.mapledelights.com).
2. "Canadian Blend" ground coffee from Murchie's 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.ediblecanada.com).
8. A bottle of craft sake made on Granville Island.
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 being swamped with locals (male and female) begging to be wrapped in sea-

weed, slathered with Moor 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.absolutespa.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)
- Willow Stream Spa (Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel; www.fairmont.com)
- Sense, a Rosewood Spa (Rosewood Hotel Georgia; www.rosewoodhotels.com/hotelgeorgia)

Story idea

Vancouver's spas are not just for the ladies 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 specific 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.

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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.
- **Urbandiner.ca:** a popular and up-to-the-minute source of information on trends and news in Vancouver's restaurant industry.

- **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, 91.7 FM on Shaw Cable and live via their website. CKNW can also be heard via the Starchoice satellite network on channel 840.
- **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.

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 multi-cultural 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.vancouver.sun.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 Monday to Friday daily newspaper.
- **24 Hours** (www.vancouver.24hrs.ca): free Monday to Friday daily.

MAGAZINES

- **Vancouver Magazine** (www.vancouvermagazine.com): popular city lifestyle 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.
- **Eat Magazine** (www.eatmagazine.ca): free magazine covering British Columbia's culinary scene.
- **Where Vancouver** (www.where.ca/Vancouver): handy visitor's guide to city neighbourhoods, restaurants, travel, attractions, lodging, dining and shopping. Free at hotels and motels across the Lower Mainland.
- **Visitor's Choice** (www.visitorschoice.ca): free publication covering Vancouver and the region for visitors.