

Vancouver Essentials



Origin of the Name: Named for British naval officer Captain George Vancouver. Searching for the Northwest Passage in 1792, Vancouver became one of the first Europeans to map North America's West Coast. Originally founded in the 1870s as the settlement of Granville, the new city was renamed after Vancouver upon its incorporation in 1886.

Coat of Arms: Granted in 1969, Vancouver's Coat of Arms honours the seaport with a shield containing a ship's sail and a crown, symbolic of the city's British connection. The top corners of the shield contain dogwood flowers, the provincial flower, while the Kwakiutl totem pole at the centre is a nod to the city's Aboriginal heritage. The city's motto spreads across the bottom.

Vancouver's Motto: "By sea, land and air we prosper."

Official Flag: The green chevron on the left side represents the land on which the city is built and the forest that has provided its prosperity. The alternating waving bars of blue and white symbolize the sea, Vancouver's other main source of wealth. The shield represents the city's status as a corporation. On the shield is the city badge, a specific mark of civic government.

Take 5 VANCOUVER'S TOP FIVE ESSENTIAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

1. **Stanley Park.**
2. **Granville Island.**
3. **Vancouver Aquarium.**
4. **Grouse Mountain.**
5. **Capilano Suspension Bridge.**

Source: Tourism Vancouver.

Official Colours: Yellow, blue/purple and white

Official Flower: Rose

Official Band: Vancouver Police Pipe Band

Voting Age: 18

Drinking Age: 19

System of Measurement: Metric

Incorporated as a City: 1886

Time Zone: Pacific

Area Codes: 604 and 778

Postal Codes: V5K to V6Z

Did you know...

that according to Tourism Vancouver, 25,000 volunteers will help pull off the 2010 Olympic Games?

The People's Park

Vancouver's famous 1,000 acre park (named after Lord Stanley, the sitting Governor General and the same Lord Stanley for whom the Stanley Cup is named) is the third largest urban park in the country after Rouge Valley in Ontario (11,600 acres) and Wascana Park in Saskatchewan (2,325 acres), and is larger than New York's celebrated Central Park (843 acres) by more than 150 acres.

Stanley Park owes its existence to one of those all too rare flukes of history. Designated army reserve land, it was protected from development in case of an attack by the U.S. When that attack failed to materialize, the new city seized the opportunity to lease the land from the federal government. Stanley Park was officially opened on September 27, 1888, just two years after incorporation.

The park is the single most important landmark in the city. For the people of Vancouver it is that respite from the hustle and bustle of urban life, a connection to nature, an oasis and a place for contemplation. It is every bit as important to the psyche of the city as Central Park is to New York or Hyde Park to London. Stanley Park has been ranked as the sixteenth best park in the world and sixth best in North America by The Project for Public Spaces.

The park contains an estimated half million trees. Some are nearly 80 meters tall, others nearly three centuries old. There are over 200 km of walkways, roads and hiking trails. The park is also home to modern contrivances such as restaurants, theatres, the Vancouver Aquarium and the city's largest water park.

One of its most notable features is the 8.8 km seawall, built over six decades to prevent seaside erosion. In the 1970s when the last pieces of the wall were constructed, the city paved its top and in 1980 it was open to walkers, bikers and rollerbladers.

When a massive windstorm felled more than 10,000 trees in the park in December of 2006, it was like a death in family. For the first time in more than 40 years the park was closed to the public. In less than a year, however, more than 7,000 private citizens and corporations stepped up with financial support and that, along with support from all levels of government, launched a massive \$9.5 million restoration project. In short order the park roads and trails were reopened and the seawall repaired.

They Said It

"Vancouver is the edge of the frontier and it attracts (it would be strange if it did not) a certain type of people."

– Allan Fotheringham, columnist, quoted in
The Vancouver Book by Chuck Davis.

Statutory Holidays: Vancouver's statutory holidays are in keeping with those across Canada. They are New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday (the first Monday of August), Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Sister Cities: Los Angeles, Guangzhou, Yokohama, Edinburgh, Odessa

Metro Vancouver: Unlike many Canadian cities, Vancouver has resisted amalgamation. This means that Greater Vancouver has 22 member municipalities, one of which is Vancouver proper.

POPULATION

Vancouver is British Columbia's largest city. In 2006, the population of Vancouver proper reached 578,041 and that of the Census Metropolitan Area (the CMA, which includes outlying municipalities) of Vancouver hit 2,116,581, making the West Coast city Canada's third largest after Toronto and Montreal. Vancouver CMA is home to about half of all British Columbians, and has almost as many people as the countries of Bhutan (2.2 million) and Latvia (2.2 million). If Vancouver was an American city it would fall somewhere between Houston (2.0 million) and Chicago (2.8 million). Twice as many people live in Vancouver as in Nova Scotia and there are more than 72 times more people in the Vancouver CMA than there are in the entire territory of Nunavut.

Take 5 VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY'S FIVE ESSENTIAL VANCOUVER READS

This list was generated from a number of Vancouver Public Library staff members. They were quick to point out that the list is by no means definitive and that they have many other suggestions.

1. ***Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination*** (2005), Lance Berelowitz. The story behind Vancouver's emerging urban form: the buildings, public spaces, extraordinary landscapes and cultural values that have turned the city into the poster-child of North American urbanism.
2. ***City of Glass: Douglas Coupland's Vancouver*** (2000), Douglas Coupland. The book looks at Vancouver from inside out, from the Grouse Grind to the shimmering glass towers, First Nations to feng-shui. Douglas Coupland takes on monster houses, weather, Sandra Bernhard, Love Boats, SkyTrain, fleece, that endless rivalry with Seattle, and even includes a short story about living in a low-rent Granville hotel.
3. ***The Jade Peony*** (1995), Wayson Choy. This wonderful book is about growing up in Vancouver's early Chinatown in the 1930s and '40s, narrated in three sections by three children from the same family.
4. ***Vancouver: An Illustrated History*** (1980), Patricia E. Roy. This book shows how in the course of a single century Vancouver rose from being a clearing in the forest to one of the most beautiful and cosmopolitan cities on the continent.
5. ***Vancouver: A Visual History*** (1992), Bruce MacDonald. Fourteen historical maps from each decade from the 1850s to the 1980s allow you to compare the physical and demographic changes in the city. Notes and a historical summary accompany each map, followed by a double page of highlights from each decade, including capsule biographies of remarkable people—some of them famous, others relatively unknown.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM

- You have a sun lamp in your rec room to help you through those sunless winter days.
- You have never spent money on curl enhancers for your hair.
- Your parka gets worn exactly once a year — on your annual trek to the mountains.
- The peaches you had for breakfast are super fresh; you picked them from the tree on your front lawn.
- Your 3-bedroom, single bath bungalow is worth as much as a mansion just about anywhere else in Canada.
- You drank green tea long before it became trendy.
- Your friend of a friend of a friend went to school with Bryan Adams.
- You like your vendor hotdog served with seaweed.
- Your commute involves a ferry ride.
- You wrote your first novel in three days at a Three-Day Novel-Writing Contest, a phenomenon that you know was born in your hometown.
- You know what it means to take a walk on The Drive.
- You know that there is no such thing as “South Van.”
- You are no longer phased by movie-star sightings.
- You consider Winnipeg to be “out east.”
- You go to English Bay to watch fireworks.
- You had your morning cuppa at Blenz and your afternoon hit of caffeine at J.J. Bean House.
- You can be at one Robson Street Starbucks and wave to a friend at another Starbucks across the street.
- You own a pair of Spank shoes.
- You have been called a Canuckle head.
- Farmed salmon just doesn't cut it.
- You have no winter driving skills. None.

VANCOUVER WHEN . . .

- In the winter you can play a round of golf in the morning and go skiing in the afternoon.
- You are annoyed rather than curious when navigating around a movie shoot underway on a downtown street.
- You've always heard that the city is too young to have heritage — and then you read about a 100-year-old house being demolished.
- Your daily jog through Stanley Park takes you past palm trees.
- Your former office building downtown has been converted to condos.
- Your local Canadian Tire just sells all-seasons.
- You plan to make a killing by renting out your house in the winter of 2010.
- Your summer of 2007 stunk. Literally.
- People from away are surprised to learn that you do not, in fact, wear socks and sandals.
- You know that the west side, the West End, and West Vancouver are not the same area.
- Your lunch spot of choice is White Spot.
- You can't figure out what the big deal is about the Steam Clock.
- Pals in Toronto are surprised to learn that neither you, nor your friends, smoke marijuana.
- You can spot cruise ship visitors from a mile away.
- You often catch a few ZZZZZs on the SkyTrain.
- You find yourself rooting for Quila's baby.
- Your favourite Subway sandwich includes the vegetarian patty.
- You've been warned ad nauseum about the “Big One” that is coming and you are oddly unconcerned.
- Your January wardrobe includes shorts.
- You have a plethora of umbrellas scattered about at work, at home and in the car, “just in case.”

POPULATION GROWTH

Between 2001 and 2006 the population of the Vancouver CMA grew by 6.5 percent. The fastest growing municipality within the CMA was Surrey, followed by Vancouver, Richmond and Burnaby. Greater Vancouver is expected to reach a population of 2.6 million by 2021 and hit the 3 million mark by 2031.

Sources: Canada Legal Information Services; Statistics Canada; Greater Vancouver Regional Development.

POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

AGE	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
0-14	178,190	167,545	345,735	16
15-24	144,760	140,945	285,705	14
25-44	308,405	329,080	637,485	30
45-64	282,240	294,375	576,615	27
65+	119,285	152,150	271,435	13

Source: Statistics Canada.

Take 5 JEN SOOKFONG LEE'S FIVE BEST THINGS ABOUT LIVING IN VANCOUVER

Born and raised in East Vancouver, Jen Sookfong Lee's well-received first novel, *The End of East* (Knopf Canada, New Face of Fiction 2007) spans almost the entire 20th century as it delves into the underside of Chinese Canadian history through the eyes of the Chan family. Lee is also involved in Vancouver's literary scene and has co-hosted CBC's Studio One Book Club.

1. **Weather.** There are few places in Canada where you're not waist-deep in snow in January or eaten alive by mosquitoes in July. While Vancouver has a reputation for rain, rain and more rain, the benefit of this temperate rainforest is that it is never too cold that you can't hike outside or too hot that you can't sun yourself on the back deck.

2. **The food.** Vancouver has a mind-boggling number of restaurants per capita, rumoured to be the highest in the country. Vancouver is famous for Asian food, especially Chinese and Japanese which is widely touted as the best outside of Asia. Included in our culinary arsenal are some of the highest profile restaurants in Canada: Lumière, West, Bishop's, Vij's and Tojo's.

3. **The diversity.** The face of the city is constantly changing and this has an enormous effect on how well Vancouverites live with one

another and how far we're willing to go to understand our neighbours. Families here are often multi-ethnic, proving that people of different backgrounds can always find common ground.

4. **The landscape.** Vancouver wouldn't be Vancouver without the ocean, mountains and trees. In downtown's Stanley Park, it's easy to disappear into the woods for a whole day and forget you're in the middle of a large, bustling city. The north shore mountains are a short drive away for skiers and snowboarders, and for those who like their recreation a little saltier, Burrard Inlet, English Bay and the Strait of Georgia surround the city on three sides.

5. **The history.** Vancouver has always been a primary industry town. Men working in the logging, mining and fishing industries came to town to spend their off-hours in what was once known as Gastown. As a result Vancouver was, at the end of the 19th, and in during much of the 20th century, a kind of sin city. Add to this mix the large immigrant communities who were not always welcomed, and you have a colourful, sometimes shameful, history. Vancouver had it all: burlesque, opium, larger than life madams and gangsters, race riots, and a police force only occasionally motivated to crack down on it all.

POPULATION IN PERSPECTIVE (2006)

- Calgary (CMA) 1,079,310
- Ottawa-Gatineau (CMA) 1,130,761
- **Vancouver (CMA) 2,116,581**
- Montreal (CMA) 3,635,571
- Toronto (CMA) 5,113,149
- New York City 21,976,224

Source: Statistics Canada.

POPULATION DENSITY (PEOPLE/KM²)

- New York City 10,194
- Toronto 3,939
- **Vancouver 735.6**
- British Columbia 4.4
- Canada 3.5

Source: Greater Vancouver Regional Development.

FERTILITY RATE (PER WOMAN, 2006)

- Vancouver: 1.0**
- British Columbia: 1.4
- Canada: 1.5

Source: Statistics Canada.

Did you know...

that Vancouver currently has the second largest trolley bus fleet in North America after San Francisco?

Did you know...

that according to Heifer International, an organization aimed at ending world hunger, 44 percent of Vancouverites grow fruits, vegetables, berries, nuts or herbs in their yards or on their balconies?

Take 5 CHUCK DAVIS' TOP FIVE HIGHLIGHTS IN VANCOUVER HISTORY

Historian Chuck Davis has been writing on Vancouver's history for more than 30 years. With hundreds of newspaper columns and 15 books to his name, Davis is currently working on what he calls the capstone of his writing career, *The History of Metropolitan Vancouver*.

1. **The Great Fire.** On June 13, 1886, just weeks after its incorporation, Vancouver burned to the ground when a fire set to burn slash roared out of control, leaving an estimated 22 dead. City pioneers began to rebuild while the embers were still warm.
2. **The arrival of the railway.** The choice of Vancouver as the terminus for the Canadian Pacific Railway ensured the town's dominant role in southwestern BC. Appropriately, the first passenger to step from the first train onto the platform on May 23, 1887, was a young Welshman named Jonathan Rogers, who, in later years, became a prominent Vancouver developer and philanthropist. The CPR received a huge swath of town as a reward for extending its line from Port Moody.
3. **The creation of Stanley Park.** The first decision of Vancouver's first city council was to request from the federal government the lease of a 1,000-acre military reserve to be used as a park. A little over two years later Mayor David Oppenheimer presided over the opening of Stanley Park, one of the largest civic parks in the world and Vancouver's most important landmark.
4. **The Strathcona Protest.** In October of 1967, the residents of the predominantly Chinese Strathcona neighborhood in the East End were outraged by city plans to level 600 homes and bypass Chinatown by running a freeway through their neighborhood. Their protests succeeded and the plans were dropped.
5. **Expo '86.** The decision to hold a world exposition in Vancouver in 1986 to coincide with the city's centennial was controversial. (Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt was a notable opponent). The six-month exposition (opened in May by Prince Charles and Princess Diana) was expected to attract 14 million, but ended up drawing 22 million and earning Vancouver an international profile. It was a heck of a show.

They Said It

"Vancouver is lovely. There is no other word for it."

– Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author and traveler
in *Our Second Adventure* (1923).

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Vancouverites live longer than Canadians living in any other CMA.

Canada	79.4
Vancouver	81.1
Toronto	81.0
Edmonton	79.8
Montreal	79.5
Halifax	79.1
Regina	78.0
Sudbury	76.7

Source: Statistics Canada.

HEALTHY CITY

	Vancouver	Canada
Percentage who smoke	15.5	24
Percentage who drink heavily	12.0	15
Percentage who are physically inactive	37.7	50
Percentage who have high blood pressure	10.7	12
Percentage who are obese	10.7	15

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey.

Did you know...

that at 137 m long and 70 m high, the Capilano Bridge is the longest and highest suspended footbridge in the world?

Take 5

KAREN QUINN FUNG'S FIVE

ESSENTIAL FREE (OR CHEAP) THINGS TO DO IN VANCOUVER

We all know that students on budgets learn to find freebies, and Karen Quinn Fung is no exception. In her six years as a communication student at Simon Fraser University, Quinn has some of the most highly developed penny-pinching skills in the city. Here are some of her tips for seeing Vancouver for free, or darn close to it.

1. **Summer Night Markets.** Held on Friday and Saturday nights, these markets are summertime staples in Vancouver's Chinatown and in Richmond. Buy products from around the world and bring your appetite for food stands flowing with unique desserts and low-priced finger foods. Save even more money — take the bus and avoid traffic congestion.
2. **Public Dreams Society.** If it's the last week of July or Halloween, make or borrow a costume and head to Trout Lake for Illuminaries Festival of Lanterns or The Parade of Lost Souls: two all-night creative public celebrations.
3. **The UBC Museum of Anthropology.** The MOA specializes in the histories of British Columbia's First Nations. Come on a Tuesday between 5 pm and 9 pm when admission is just a flat fiver. The trek is also a great excuse to check out the UBC campus, particularly the work of architect Arthur Erickson.
4. **The Bloedel Conservatory.** The Bloedel Conservatory, located in Queen Elizabeth Park, is the climate controlled home to over 100 species of birds and tropical plants, all for the bargain basement entrance fee of \$4.60 for an adult. The park boasts a panoramic view of the city and also features a duck pond and cherry trees that are dripping in blossoms in the spring.
5. **Critical Mass.** Vancouver has a thriving cycling community. For free, you can join hundreds of cyclists in a mass bike ride. Bike sculptures, costumes and the views as you cross local bridges make this experience one of a kind. Cyclists (and rollerbladers) assemble for these rides on the lawn of the Vancouver Art Gallery on the last Friday of each month.

Take 5 TOP FIVE ETHNIC ORIGINS CLAIMED BY VANCOUVERITES (2006)

1. **British Isles:** 753,215
2. **East and South East Asian:** 584,895
3. **Western European:** 289,030
4. **South Asian:** 208,535
5. **Southern European:** 172,420

Source: Statistics Canada.

MEDIAN AGE

BC	40.2 years
Vancouver	39.1 years
Men	38.3 years
Women	39.3 years

GOLDEN YEARS

In all, 13 percent of Vancouverites are 65 or older. The oldest community in the CMA is White Rock, where 28 percent of the population is over 65 and the youngest is Anmore, where just six percent of the people are in their golden years.

GIRLS AND BOYS

- Percentage of Vancouverites who are male: 48.8
- Female: 51.2

Source: Statistics Canada.

FIRST COMES MARRIAGE

• Marriage rate (per 1,000 population) in BC	5.3
• Marriage rate in Prince Edward Island, the highest	6.0
• Marriage rate in Quebec, the lowest	2.8
• Canada's marriage rate	4.7

Source: Statistics Canada.

D-I-V-O-R-C-E

• Rate of divorce (per 100 marriages) in BC	44.7
• Divorce rate in Quebec, the highest	49.7
• Divorce rate in Prince Edward Island, the lowest	27.3
• Canada's divorce rate	38.3

Source: Statistics Canada.

NEWCOMERS

Forty percent of all Vancouverites are immigrants — up from 29 percent in 1986. The community in the Greater Vancouver area with the highest immigrant population is Richmond at 57 percent, followed by Burnaby (51 percent), Vancouver (46 percent) and Surrey (38 percent).

By comparison, nearly 46 percent of people living in the Toronto CMA, 24 percent of people in the Calgary CMA and 21 percent living in the Montreal CMA are immigrants, with 19 percent, 23 percent and 22 percent, respectively, having arrived between 2001 and 2006.

Sources: BC Statistics; Statistics Canada.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Roman Catholic	18.5 percent
United Church	8.6 percent
Anglican	6.8 percent
Sikh	4.5 percent
Buddhist	4.0 percent
Baptist	2.5 percent
Muslim	2.5 percent
Hindu	1.3 percent
Jewish	0.9 percent

Did you know...

that on April 24, 1872, Gassy Jack Deighton flew the first Canadian flag ever on the Burrard Inlet when he raised it above Deighton House?

Pentecostal	0.86 percent
Greek Orthodox	0.57 percent
Jehovah's Witnesses	0.56 percent
Mormon	0.26 percent
Pagan	0.15 percent

Source: Statistics Canada.

VANCOUVER IS HOME TO

- The second largest K-12 school system in BC with 56,000 fulltime students, 91 elementary schools, 18 secondary schools and seven adult education centres
- 20 private and public colleges
- Two research universities
- 58 vocational/career-oriented institutions
- 30 private language schools operate in Vancouver, most of them focusing on English as a second language instruction

HIGHER LEARNING

Vancouver is internationally renowned for excellence in education and each year attracts nearly 150,000 international students to its post-secondary institutions, lured by the high quality of education and by recent regulations that have made it easier for international students to work in BC upon graduation.

Vancouver's University of British Columbia is consistently ranked in the world's top 50. In 2007, the *Times Higher Education* rankings placed UBC 33rd and *Maclean's* annual university ranking named Simon Fraser University top among mid-sized institutions in Canada for medical and science grants, faculty awards, and social science and humanities grants and second for overall academic excellence.

Did you know...

that according to Statistics Canada, 52 percent of city residents and 43 percent of Metro residents have a first language other than English?

HEALTH CARE

- Hospitals/Acute Care: 13
- Diagnostic Treatment Centres: 3
- Number of beds: 8,936
- Number of doctors: 3,128

Sources: Vancouver Coastal Health; College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC; Canadian Medical Association.

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

Vancouver is home to four professional sports franchises. The Vancouver Canucks hockey team plays out of General Motors Place, the BC Lions play out of BC Place Stadium, the Vancouver Canadians baseball club's home turf is Nat Bailey Stadium and the Vancouver Whitecaps FC soccer club use the pitch at Swangard Stadium.

Web links

City of Vancouver Website

vancouver.ca

Find out city government, services and much more at this site maintained by the City of Vancouver.

Volunteer Vancouver

www.volunteervancouver.ca

Find out how to get involved in city life.

Vancouver Cams

www.vancouver.com/community/webcams/

Check out any number of community web cams, in real time.

Did you know...

that in 2006, Vancouver was voted the world's most attractive destination based on livability according to *The Economist* Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)? Vancouver beat out Melbourne (second) and Vienna (third).