

MAIN COURSE: NEP CAFE TAKES ON THE NIGHT!

THE MAGAZINE of ORANGE COUNTY

Orange Coast

50
YEARS

OUTDOOR Adventures



FOR THE WILD ONES
& THE MILD ONES



VICTORIA

Discover the coastal allure of British Columbia's capital city. by Danielle Bauter

Nestled on the southernmost tip of Vancouver Island, Victoria is surrounded by lush greenery and rugged landscapes. From whale watching to exploring historic landmarks, it is a playground for outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs, and culture seekers alike. Sample the city's culinary scene with a walking or bike tour, or take a road trip down the coast on the Sooke Flavour Trail. Sip high tea in regal surroundings. Stroll along the lively Inner Harbour. And browse at a beloved indie bookstore for hidden treasures.

ARRIVE IN STYLE

Travel to Victoria by seaplane, a breathtaking experience that combines the thrill of flight with stunning aerial views of the city and its surrounding natural beauty. As you approach Victoria, you'll catch glimpses of the jagged coastline, verdant forests, and picturesque islands dotting the Salish Sea. Harbour Air is North America's largest and first fully carbon-neutral airline, and it offers daily scheduled flights from destinations like Vancouver, Seattle, Whistler, and Tofino (\$119 each way and up). Charter flights and tours are also available.

TIMELESS ELEGANCE

The Magnolia Hotel & Spa offers a luxurious retreat in the heart of Victoria, combining elegant accommodations, top-notch amenities, complimentary bike rentals, and personalized service (\$230 and up). The hotel's 64 guest rooms are lavishly appointed, some with views of the Inner Harbour. In addition to the rejuvenating spa, it's also home to The Courtney Room, an award-winning restaurant known for its innovative Pacific Northwest cuisine and

Fairmont Empress Hotel on the
Victoria Harbour



TIP FROM A LOCAL

“Blanshard Street is a foodie’s paradise. Anchored by the historic Royal Theatre, this bustling street has a vast array of restaurant options, including L’Apero Wine & Cheese Bistro, La Taquisa, Shuck Taylors, Italian Food Imports, and so much more.”

—BONNIE TODD, VICTORIA RESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF OFF THE EATEN TRACK

sophisticated ambience. Available to guests, curated trail maps offer a selection of themed self-guided walking and bike tours.

ROYAL TREATMENT

Tea at the Fairmont Empress Hotel is an iconic experience that has been cherished by visitors and locals alike for more than a century. Known for its impeccable service and historic charm, Tea at the Empress is not just a meal; it’s a tradition that celebrates the art of indulgence. As you enter the opulent lobby lounge, you’ll be offered a selection of premium teas and a tantalizing array of sweet and savory delights that include freshly baked scones served with clotted cream and preserves (\$95 per person). For the ultimate treat, book a room as well (\$306 and up).

CULINARY TOUR

Off the Eaten Track food tours help you discover Victoria’s hidden culinary gems (\$52 to \$59). The Hip & Hidden Chinatown tour kicks off at the historic Hudson Bay Building,

which is now home to the Victoria Public Market. Explore the diverse culinary scene along Fisgard Street in Chinatown that includes a stop at Maiiz Nixtamal for tacos and La Roux Patisserie for macarons. Pass through Fan Tan Alley, which is known for being the narrowest commercial street in North America, and make your way to Dumpling Drop for Thai-style fried dumplings.

BOTANICAL BOOST

Located about an hour’s drive down the coast from downtown Victoria, Sooke is known for its stunning natural beauty and laid-back coastal charm. Plan a trip with Vancouver Island Expeditions, where you can choose from a variety of half-day, full-day, or multiday tours. The Sooke Flavour Trail takes you to the dreamy lavender fields of Bilston Creek Farm, with its beautifully restored barn and farmhouse. Stops at Sheringham Distillery for botanical-infused artisan spirits and at French Beach Provincial Park are also a must.

WELL READ

A destination for bibliophiles for more than 60 years, Munro’s Books was established by Jim and Alice Munro, and it quickly gained a reputation for its eclectic collection of books and dedication to supporting local authors and publishers. It is housed in a stunning heritage building on Government Street, with high ceilings and shelves lined with books, including a curated selection of works by Canadian and Indigenous writers.

WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

Peak whale watching season in Victoria typically runs from April to October, but Prince of Whales Adventures operates tours year-round, weather permitting. Opt for a comfortable vessel or amp up the adrenaline on an open-air 12-passenger Zodiac boat (\$117 per person). With a three-hour adventure, there’s a strong chance of seeing orcas, humpback whales, sea lions, dolphins, and bald eagles. **OC**

LEFT: The lobby at the Magnolia Hotel & Spa

RIGHT: Fan Tan Alley



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

July 1: Canada Day celebrations begin with a full roster of events that include a pancake breakfast, live music and dancing, the Flavour of Canada Food Village, and fireworks.