

# The Essential Itinerary: Campbell River, B.C.

A Vancouver Island getaway filled with hiking, whale watching and affordable luxury on the wild West Coast of British Columbia

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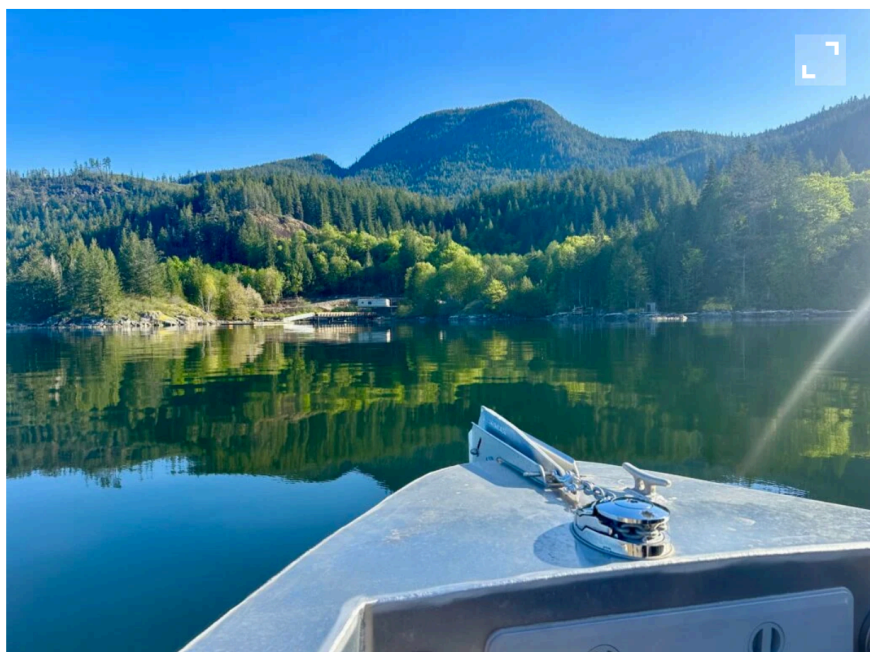


**R**ugged, unassuming, and most of all, authentic, Campbell River is a gateway to adventure and reflection on the east coast of Vancouver Island. In this lesser-known B.C. town, everyday life revolves around the rhythms of the Earth. One moment, you're hiking through towering old-growth forests, and the next, you're sipping coffee dockside, watching orcas glide through the water.

Less polished than other coastal towns in B.C., Campbell River has a unique character that keeps visitors coming back. But look deeper into its subtle allure, and you will find it has much to offer.

Recognized as the 'Salmon Capital of the World,' Campbell River is famous for its fishing. Coho, chinook, chum, pink and sockeye salmon pass through the town along their migration routes during the summer and autumn spawning seasons when millions of fish are in the area. Whether you are fly-fishing or heading out on a charter, your chances of making a catch are nearly guaranteed. For those who don't fish, learning about the town's deep relationship to salmon will not go unnoticed, as it is evident in festivals, art and cuisine.

But for rod-and-reel resistant visitors, this under-the-radar town surprises with adventure, culture and quiet charm too.



Looking out from the bow of Homalco Cultural & Wildlife Tours' boat. (Photo: Bianca Bujan)



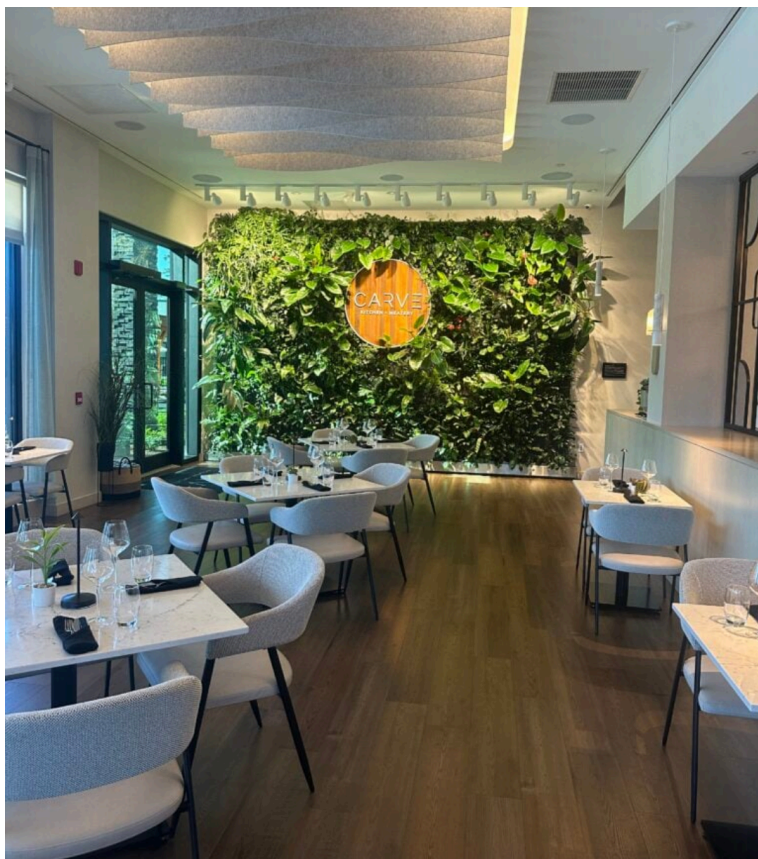
## DAY 1

### 2 P.M. | SEASIDE STROLL AND DRIFTWOOD DETOUR

As you cruise into Campbell River along the main road, a striking sight will make you hit the brakes: a wide-scale whale sculpture made entirely of driftwood. Up close, the 30-foot-long humpback impresses, with weathered wood and lifelike curves, created by artist Alex Witcombe. This is one of many wooden sculptures found along the 8-kilometre Rotary Seawalk, which begins here. The paved walkway parallels the pebble beaches of Discovery Passage. For added fun, follow the [Driftwood Creations Scavenger Hunt](#) along the way.

### 5 P.M. | BITES AND BREWS

Affordable luxury on Vancouver Island is hard to come by. The boutique hotel offers spectacular views of the surrounding area, an upscale restaurant, an 18-hole world-class golf course, a luxury spa, and an overall premium hospitality experience. After a quick check-in, head downstairs to [Carve Kitchen & Meatery](#) for dinner and drinks. Sustainability takes centre stage at this sophisticated steakhouse, with greenery clipped from the on-site garden and affixed to the living wall to enhance the ambiance. Sink your teeth into a steak with bernaise, and settle on a whisky sour if you're stuck for a pick after scanning the extensive cocktail, craft beer and wine menu.



## DAY 2

### 7 A.M. | WHALES AND TALES

"Those are definitely Bigg's killer whales," shares Guy enthusiastically, the boat captain on the Indigenous-led [People, Water, and Land](#) tour by [Homalco Wildlife & Cultural Tours](#). Wildlife sightings are common on this five-hour, culture-focused tour, which stops at the uninhabited Homalco First Nation village site of Aupe (also known as Church House). There, you work with cedar and listen to shared stories and songs. Along the way, keep your eyes peeled for orcas, humpback whales, dolphins and porpoises that flock these waters to feed on salmon, sometimes joined by black and grizzly bears drawn to the feast along the shoreline.



### 1 P.M. | SWEET TREATS AND TOWN STREETS

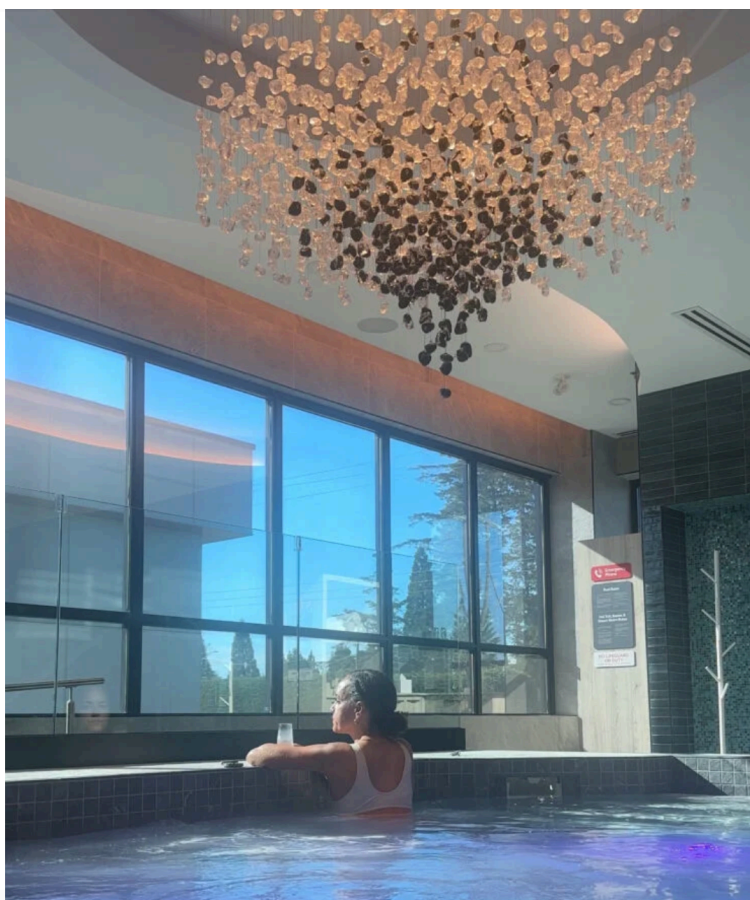
The excitement from the morning adventure will have you craving a bite, so head into town for a sweet treat at [Freyja](#). The Scandinavian-style croissant bakery is best known for its butter croissants, which have 27 layers and come in various shapes, flavours and fillings. From savoury bites like the prosciutto and cheese croissant to a cream cheese and spinach roulé to sweet eats like the salted caramel chocolate dome and blackberry caramel croissant, Freyja has something for everyone. Pair the key lime cruffin with a hot vanilla latte, then stroll the short streets of town and hit the shops.



## DAY 3

### 11 A.M. | WOOSY WANDER AND WATERFALLS

Conveniently located just two kilometres from Campbell River's downtown core, [Elk Falls](#) is an ideal morning hike that will lead you through forested trails to a dangling suspension bridge. Here, visitors can take in sweeping views of the thundering 25-metre falls from the above platform. While there, you can climb down a trail for a closer look and even perch on a rock for a picnic.



### 2 P.M. | SOAK AND SPA

Wrap up your stay with a soak in the therapeutic mineral pool at Naturally Pacific Resort to soothe sore muscles. Containing magnesium, potassium, and sodium, the pool's water helps replenish minerals lost from the body through a long day outdoors. After a long soak, stand in the state-of-the-art experience showers that combine aquatherapy and aromatherapy for the ultimate way to unwind at [Immersion Spa & Wellness](#). 🌿



## Where to stay

Owned by a local family and woman-run, [Naturally Pacific Resort](#) is a boutique destination resort found at the intersection of the forests, mountains and Pacific Ocean. Along with the on-site golf course, spa, restaurant, and 10,000 square-foot garden, the resort also features an elegantly designed outdoor patio with a fire table and full bar service that is truly a sight to behold. And despite only being a few years old, Naturally Pacific Resort is already proving its status. Based on TripAdvisor guest reviews, the resort was listed as one of the top 10 per cent of resorts worldwide and was named to *Travel + Leisure's* [The It List earlier in 2025](#) for best affordable luxury. And to top it all off, the hotel is pet-friendly, so you can bring your furry friends too!