

What's New in Victoria



Destination Greater Victoria is honoured to be based on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Sustainability

Greater Victoria was the first urban city in North America to obtain Biosphere Certification in March of 2023 and has since been recertified in 2024 and 2025. Destination Greater Victoria continues to expand this commitment by supporting business members through the Biosphere Certification Accelerator Program, offering subsidized access to the certification for all member businesses. To date, 21 Destination Greater Victoria members have earned Biosphere Certification and counting. In addition, Destination Greater Victoria has developed and implemented both a Circular Economy Strategy and a Climate Action Plan to guide long-term sustainability efforts within the visitor economy.

From the Circular Economy Strategy, the Circular and Sustainable Drinking Water Program was created by Destination Greater Victoria, providing subsidies to hotels across Victoria to install water refill stations in exchange for a ban on the distribution of single-use plastic water bottles to their guests. This initiative aims to significantly reduce single-use plastic consumption by eliminating a consistent source of plastic waste within the visitor economy and making convenient, sustainable hydration options readily available.



Accessibility

Victoria International Airport Launches Accessibility Initiative MagnusCards

Victoria Airport Authority (VAA), in partnership with Magnusmode, has launched a new accessibility initiative, MagnusCards®, to assist travellers. MagnusCards is a smartphone application available for iOS and Android, offering travellers step-by-step visuals, audio, and text how-to's to make everyday activities more manageable for people of all abilities. This initiative helps to improve the passenger experience at Victoria International Airport (YYJ) by reducing barriers for travel and ensuring that everyone that uses our airport can navigate their journey safely and efficiently.



INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES



Songhees Tours

Songhees Tours offers immersive, Indigenous-led canoe and walking tours through the heart of Victoria's Inner Harbour. Deeply driven by authenticity, the tours are guided by ləkʷəŋən hosts who bring guests onto the highways of their ancestors, where every paddle, stroke and footstep is grounded in truth, protocol, and lived experience. Proudly owned by Songhees Nation, Songhees Tours is the only Indigenous-owned and operated tour provider in the Inner Harbour. Supported by community Elders, these experiences invite guests into real cultural exchange—where oral history, language, and place-based teachings come together in unforgettable ways.

Indigenous Roots Coffee Company

Launched on September 30th, 2024, Indigenous Roots Coffee Company is 100% Indigenous owned (Haida and Métis) and have developed their business with Community in mind. Each of their coffee blends is partnered with grassroots, local Indigenous initiatives. Using high grade, ethically sourced, specialty coffee beans, they have developed a product that is as unique and authentic as the art on the packaging. By working very intentionally, Indigenous Roots Coffee offers a product that tells their stories and provides excellence all around.



Placemaking Project Celebrating Ləkʷəŋən Artworks

The Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA), together with Xʷsəpsəm Nation and Songhees Nation, launched a collaborative placemaking project installing ləkʷəŋən artworks in downtown Victoria, aimed at connecting residents and visitors to the area's rich First Nations' culture. Placemaking is a concept that expresses a community's identity through art, design, or architecture. The project's first artworks are viewable at the Inner Harbour causeway, including four red and yellow octopus umbrellas designed by Songhees artist and educator Clarence "Butch Dick" (Yux'wey'lupton).

GETTING HERE AND GETTING AROUND



Seair Seaplanes

Vancouver-based Seair has expanded its service area with a new harbour-to-harbour route connecting Vancouver Harbour and Victoria's Inner Harbour. Launched on October 20th 2025, the service provides travellers with an additional, convenient option for moving between the two cities. Operating out of the former Hyack Air terminal at 1234 Wharf Street, beneath the Victoria Regent Hotel, Seair offers up to 10 flights a day between Vancouver and Victoria.

Porter Airlines

Starting May 15th, 2025, service between Ottawa International Airport (YOW) and Victoria International Airport (YYJ) operates up to seven weekly roundtrip flights.

Porter Airlines began service between Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ) and Victoria International Airport (YYJ) with the new Embraer E195-E2 aircraft in September 2023.



Harbour Air

Effective October 27th, 2025, Harbour Air has reinstated its winter, wheeled flights between Vancouver and Victoria. In addition, the airline has announced a network expansion for summer 2026, including new service between downtown Victoria and downtown Seattle, launching June 11th, 2026, ahead of the FIFA World Cup.

☞HOTELS & ACCOMMODATION

☞MICHELIN KEY DESIGNATIONS



Fairmont Empress Hotel

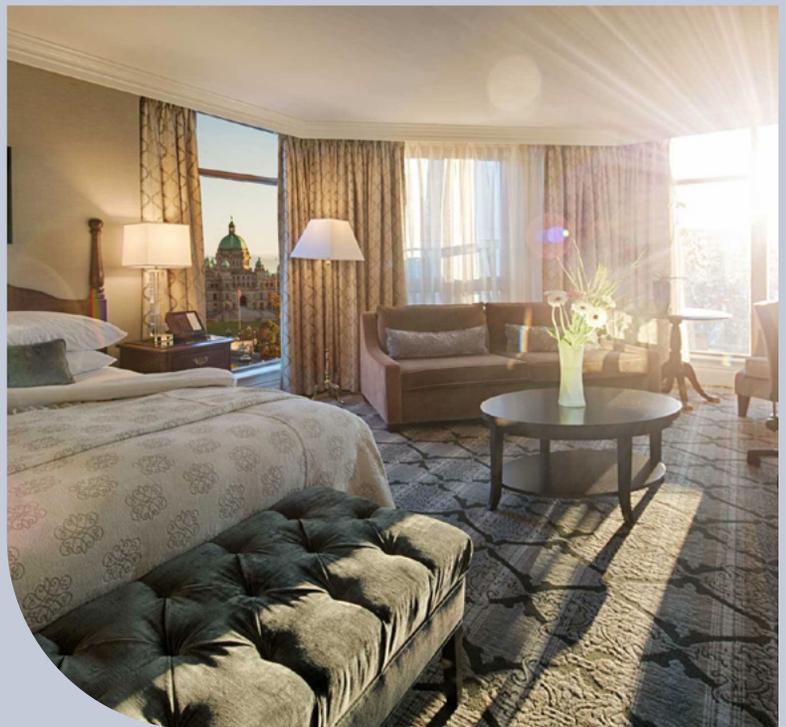
The Fairmont Empress is the iconic “Castle on the Coast” with sweeping views of Victoria’s Inner Harbour. It is an ultimate blend of modern and historic charm. The Gold Floor underwent a complete renovation in 2023 and is a highlight that is not to be missed. From January to April 2026, the Fairmont Empress will continue its transformation with additional enhancements. During this period, Qat the Empress will be closed, with dining service temporarily relocating to The Bengal.

Best Historic Hotel in the Americas (Historic Hotels Worldwide Awards of Excellence); Michelin Key; #1 City Hotel in Canada (Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards).

The Magnolia Hotel & Spa

The Magnolia Hotel & Spa is a modern boutique through and through. With sixty-four rooms it’s kept to a personable scale, and the service is pure West Coast charm. The décor is classic, never breaking the spell that’s cast by the views of the historic downtown, and the bathrooms stick with tradition as well – deep soaking tubs are a highlight. In fact indulgence, in one form or another, is what the Magnolia is all about: the Spa Magnolia cements the hotel’s status as a getaway destination, and The Courtney Room, just off the lobby, would have suited the Victorian Victoria just as it does the modern one.

#1 Hotel in Canada (Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards); Michelin Key





Rosemead House

Following an extensive restoration, Esquimalt's historic Old English Inn has reopened as Rosemead House, now offering full luxury hotel service. Originally designed by renowned architect Samuel Maclure—best known for his work on Government House (with Francis Rattenbury) and Hatley Castle—the property has been thoughtfully reimagined while honouring its storied past. The restored hotel features 28 distinctive guest rooms and suites, the Salt and Ivy Spa, and the signature Janevca Kitchen and Lounge, which opened to the public in October 2024, setting the stage for Rosemead House's return.

New Hotel in Old Town

Victoria Council has approved a project to overhaul two heritage buildings in Old Town to make way for a 139-room hotel. UVic Properties and Chard Development plan to use the site to build a Hyatt-centric, branded hotel covering almost a full block of Broad Street. The proposal preserves the front and rear walls and parts of the side walls of the Duck's historic building, as well as an original rock wall of the Carriage Factory, which dates to 1874.



AWARDED HOTELS



Abigail's Hotel

#1 Hotel in Canada (Tripadvisor Traveller's Choice Awards)



Oak Bay Beach Hotel

#1 Hotel in Western Canada (Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards)



The Parkside Hotel & Spa

Named to Canada's Top 25 Hotels, 2025 Travellers' Choice Awards



Victoria Regent Waterfront Hotel & Suites

Tripadvisor Traveller's Choice Award

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Salt & Ivy Wellness Spa & Retreat

Salt & Ivy Wellness Spa & Retreat launched in November 2025, blending modern science with time-honoured ritual at the core of its philosophy. The spa prides itself on innovation while honouring ancient wellness practices. Salt & Ivy will open in two phases: the first debuted in November 2025 with a range of sensory-focused treatments, and the second will introduce an immersive hydrotherapy experience inspired by European thermal traditions, featuring hot and cold therapy, dry saunas, steam rooms, a rain room, snow room, cold plunge, and a dedicated rest and recovery lounge.

Drift: The Parkside Hotel & Spa

The Parkside Hotel & Spa has introduced a new wellness experience designed to make guests feel as though they're floating into complete tranquillity. Drift | A Floating Sound Meditation blends crystal alchemy bowls, gongs, and other sacred instruments guided by Pilar Munoz, all while participants float on the warm water. The movement of sound waves through both the body and the surrounding water encourages deep relaxation and calm. The 75-minute experience is offered in both morning and evening sessions, providing an immersive moment of solitude.



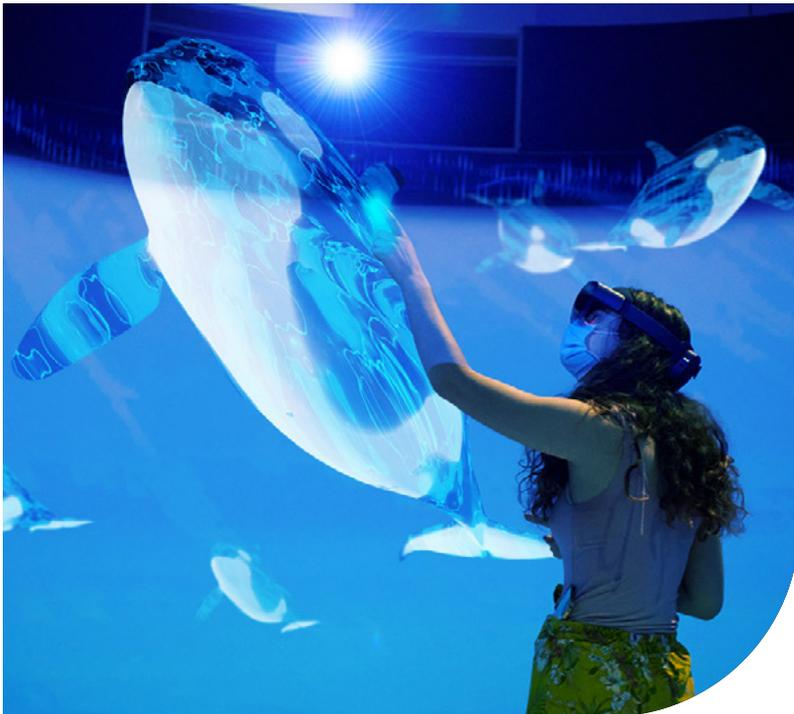
Intention: A Wellness Getaway in Victoria

Start your year centred with Intention: A wellness getaway in Victoria, as the third annual kicks off January 4th - 17th, 2027. Immerse yourself in wisdom, community and uplifting practices on an intuitive wellness journey. Reconnect to practices that bring you balance and clarity, with experiences like speaker series, cooking classes, and guided workouts. Whether you're seeking moments of zen, restful sleep programs, or awe-inspiring views, Victoria's hotels offer unique ways to help you flourish. Reaffirm your goals and rediscover what wellness means to you in this community-centred, vibrant city.

ART, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

The Victoria Chinatown Museum's Exhibits through Spring 2026

- A Seat at the Table: Chinese Immigration and British Columbia is a travelling exhibit on loan from Vancouver's Chinese Canadian Museum, now featured at the Victoria Chinatown Museum in Fan Tan Alley until spring 2026. The exhibit explores Chinese Canadian history through the lens of restaurants and food culture, sharing stories through display panels, audio clips, and video features.
- On until spring 2026, the Victoria Chinatown Museum Society presents a curated exhibit titled A Little Bit Sweet: Chinese Canadian Confections, Culture & Community. This exhibit shares stories from four local families, exploring traditional Chinese desserts and their power to connect communities, cultures, and generations.



Royal BC Museum - Critical Distance Exhibit

In Victoria, BC, you can get up close with orcas, not only in the water but also at the Royal BC Museum's new exhibit Critical Distance, from January 23rd to July 6th. Presented by Nature Canada and created by Adam May and Chris Campkin, this immersive augmented reality experience brings visitors face-to-face with a holographic orca pod. The exhibit takes you on a journey alongside J-Pod to learn more about this group of 25 endangered Southern Resident orcas that inhabit the Salish Sea off Vancouver Island.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibit returns to the Royal BC Museum from February 6th to April 12th for its 61st year, travelling from London's Natural History Museum. Experience earth's beauty through the lens of photographers from around the world. Each image offers fresh perspectives, diverse landscapes, and intricate wildlife sure to capture your attention. The adult Grand Title Winner, Ghost Town Visitor by South African photographer Wim van den Heever, will also be on display.



**Wildlife
Photographer
of the Year**

Feb 6–Apr 12, 2026
rbcm.ca/wildlife



Beehive Wool Shop Expansion

As of November 17th 2025, The Beehive Wool Shop has expanded into a multi-use space called the Beehive Fibre Arts Centre, designed to cultivate a vibrant fibre art community. The centre offers gallery display opportunities, classroom space, and a welcoming social area for makers to connect and create.

Monkey C Interactive's Artcade

Monkey C Interactive's Artcade is truly a one-of-a-kind space filled with interactive art experiences featuring sound and sculptural installations by local composers, DJs, and artists. Each piece is designed to be played and activated by guests. Press buttons, flick switches, and be surprised by the sounds and lights that emerge. In early 2026, Monkey C Interactive's Artcade will expand by 1,000 square feet with The Alien Lab, offering even more room to explore what happens when you simply play.



AWARDED RESTAURANT



Café Malabar

Café Malabar took the number five spot on the Top 10 list of Air Canada's Best New Restaurants 2024. Head Chefs Kiran Kolathodan and Karma Tenpa opened in June, 2023, at Victoria Public Market. As a small restaurant, this recognition reflects the dedication of their team and the warm embrace of the community, which has allowed them to share the vibrant flavours of Kerala.

In February 2025, Café Malabar relocated to 407 Swift Street —bigger, better, and just around the corner from where it used to be, continuing their culinary journey in an even more welcoming space.



Janevca Kitchen & Lounge

Janevca Kitchen & Lounge, located in the historic Rosemead House, celebrates the art of sharing through locally sourced ingredients and wood-fire cooking. Designed for friends and family to gather around the table, the menu encourages guests to sample multiple dishes for a full culinary experience. Under the creative vision of Chef Andrea Alridge, Janevca has brought this concept to life, earning the prestigious title of YAM Magazine's Best New Restaurant in 2025.

Marilena Café & Raw Bar

Marilena Café & Raw Bar has not only earned the title of Victoria's No. 1 Fine Dining Restaurant, but was also named Canada's No. 1 Fine Dining Restaurant by Tripadvisor's Best of the Best Travelers' Choice Awards, an honour celebrating the top 1% of restaurants worldwide. And that's not all: Marilena also took home YAM Magazine's prestigious Restaurant of the Year award in 2025.



The Bengal - Fairmont Empress

The Bengal at the Fairmont Empress has reopened to the public after closing in 2016 during the hotel's renovations. Originally named the Coronet Lounge in 1954, it was Victoria's first cocktail lounge. Today, the revitalized Bengal serves breakfast and dinner, meticulously preserving its heritage-style beams while creating a bright space and enhancing its connection to the surrounding gardens.

Pendray Inn – New Evening Scottish High Tea

Discover the hearty elegance of Scottish High Tea, a new evening dining experience introduced at Pendray Tea House. Unlike the refined Afternoon Tea, traditionally associated with light bites and delicate flavours, Scottish High Tea originated as a robust evening meal for workers in Scotland and Northern England. It features a satisfying mix of savoury dishes, freshly baked scones, and seasonal sweets—all crafted with premium, locally sourced ingredients that showcase the best of our region.



A Taste of Victoria Food Tours

Two Exciting New Culinary Experiences:

Alleyways and Ales

For beer lovers and history buffs alike, the Alleyways and Ales Craft Beer Tour provides a fascinating journey through Victoria's historic Chinatown and Old Town.

This 2.5-hour walking tour guides guests through hidden alleyways and iconic pubs, stopping at four local breweries for four beer tastings and three food tastings from local vendors. Between tastings, guests learn insider information about local brewers and enjoy a fun dialogue on the rich history of these historic districts.

Vistas and Views

For those seeking a more upscale dining experience, Vistas and Views takes guests on a progressive-style lunch/dinner, visiting three of Victoria's finest restaurants for a complete 3-course meal. Each stop showcases a different gourmet course, accompanied by stunning views ranging from the Inner Harbour to the snow-capped Olympic Mountains. Guests can opt to enhance their experience with local beer or wine pairings.





Hoyne Brewing, Gold

Pale Bitter European Beer: Hoyne Brewing's North Star Light Lager

Vancouver Island Brewing, Gold

American Pale Ale: Vancouver Island Brewing's Mystic Haze Pale Ale

Superflux Beer Co., Gold

Mixed Style Beer: Superflux Beer Co.'s FOM

Phillips Brewing + Malting Co., Gold

Fruit Beer: Phillips Brewing + Malting Co.'s Dinosaur Dragonfruit Lychee

Category 12 Brewing, Gold

Spiced Beer: Category 12 Brewing's Spruce Tip IPA

Whistle Buoy Brewing, Gold

American Wild Ale: Whistle Buoy Brewing's Fuzzy Peach

Legend Award

Paul Hadfield of Spinnakers

Macaloney's Island Distillery

On January 16th, 2025, Macaloney's Island Distillery took home Canadian Whisky of the Year honours for its Peat Project Moscatel Barrique single malt at the 2025 Canadian Whisky Awards. Macaloney's was also awarded Gold for Best Canadian Small Batch Single Malt at the World Whiskies Awards for its Peat Project Sugar Kelp Infused Red Wine STR Peated Single Malt.

The 100% malted barley whisky received the top overall score from a panel of 14 judges, who blind-tasted and scored around 200 competing whiskies. It was distilled using local barley, peat-smoked at the distillery, and matured in a European Moscatel wine barrique.



Merridale Cidery & Distillery

Recently awarded Gold at the World Whiskies Awards, Merridale was recognized for crafting the Best Canadian Small Batch Single Malt 12 Years & Under with its exceptional Whisky Jack's. This prestigious honour highlights Merridale's exceptional craftsmanship and places the distillery among the country's top whisky producers.

Whisky Jack's is a rare single malt, single barrel whisky made from organic British Columbia malt. It was aged five years in French oak, followed by an additional two years in a cider brandy barrel, then bottle-aged for over a decade after being distilled in 2007. With remarkable depth and complexity, its gentle finish and distinctive character reflect a careful maturation process, setting it apart as one of British Columbia's oldest and most distinctive craft whiskies.

Sanctuary Single Malt Whisky

Embodying Canada's West Coast terroir and British Columbia-grown barley, Phillips Brewery proudly introduces its 2026 release: Sanctuary Single Malt Whisky. Crafted with locally grown barley malted on-site, this whisky matures in a combination of Bourbon, red wine, and Phillips beer casks, creating a distinctive depth of flavour and balance. Inspired by the grit and rugged beauty of Vancouver Island's coastal forests, Sanctuary reflects a character that is bold, unique, and undeniably West Coast.



2026 Anniversaries

Abkhazi Garden
80th Anniversary



Dutch Bakery
80th Anniversary



Miniature World
55th Anniversary



Belfry Theatre
50th Anniversary



FRS Clipper
40th Year Celebration



Intrepid Theatre
40th Anniversary



Victoria Fringe Fest
40th Anniversary



Victoria Pedicab Company
25^h Anniversary



Victoria Whisky Festival
20th Anniversary



Flavour Trails
20th Anniversary



Hoyne Brewing Company
15th Anniversary



Macaloney's Island Distillery
10th Anniversary



Awards, Accolades & Designations



- #1 Small City in the World in 2023, 2024 and 2025– Condé Nast Traveler Reader's Choice Awards
- Top 10 Most Walkable Cities in the World - Skyscanner 2025
- Ranked 3rd Globally among Small Cities on the Global Destination Sustainability Index (2025)
- #2 Best Island in the World (Vancouver Island) - Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards
- 2025 Good Housekeeping Family Travel Award Winner
- Resale Capital of Canada

DESTINATION GREATER
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