



Long Weekend VANCOUVER

The urban jewel of British Columbia, stunning Vancouver rises from the Pacific coastline on a backdrop of mountains. This vibrant city has been shaped by its rich indigenous history, seaport location, and diverse population. Vancouver offers picturesque harbor views and outdoor adventure opportunities, plus city sophistication and a fantastic, Asian-influenced culinary scene. The perfect long weekend destination, Vancouver is also an ideal addition before or after an Alaska Cruise, or as part of a larger Whistler or Vancouver Island itinerary.

Day One

Get an early start to the day (or off your Alaska cruise ship) and head to Granville Island! Located on a peninsula in the middle of the city, Granville Island is home to a huge public market with food vendors, artisan shops, and galleries. The first stop of the morning will be breakfast from Lee's Donuts, which has sold delicious, homemade donuts in bright yellow boxes for over 45 years. Now that you've got some energy, it's time to explore the market and shop for your picnic lunch.. Each day, fruit and vegetable sellers display a visual feast of exquisitely arranged familiar and exotic produce. For more savory selections, you'll find plentiful cheese and charcuterie counters, fish mongers, and butcher shops. Don't miss Zara's Italian Deli and Market for olives and ready to eat pasta salads.



As for shopping, be sure to walk to the Artisan's Marketplace area where artists and craftsmen create and sell their goods. BC Blacksmith, Vancouver Studio Glass, and Search + Rescue Denim Co. are some personal favorites. The Wickaninnish Gallery features a fine variety of local indigenous art at a range of price points. Need a break from all the shopping? I recommend coffee from Off the Tracks Espresso Bar or sampling premium sake from Artisan Sake Maker. Before you leave (picnic provisions in your backpack!), enjoy a stroll along the waterfront and enjoy watching the boats in the busy marina.



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It's time to explore magnificent Stanley Park, one of the largest urban parks in North America. But first, you'll need to stop on Denman Street near the corner of Robson and rent an e-bike or bicycle from one of the several available rental shops. Weather permitting, biking is absolutely the best way to see the park and is sure to be one of the highlights of your trip to Vancouver. Head down Denman towards the water to pick up the paved bike path that makes a 6 mile loop along the Stanley Park Seawall.



Once you return your bikes, you'll probably be ready for a little downtime back at the hotel before dinner. As you may have detected, food experiences are essential to all my travel plans. Vancouver has amazing restaurants, particularly if you enjoy Chinese and Japanese cuisine. For your meal tonight, I suggest Miku, an upscale sushi restaurant with views of Coal Harbor (reservations required). For something more casual, I can't go to Dinesty Dumpling House on Robson Street enough times in my life. Enjoy your dinner and sleep well!



The views are simply spectacular – you'll see the North Shore Mountains, the Lions Gate Bridge, and English Bay. There are many places to pause and enjoy the viewpoints and park sights along the way. One of my favorite stops is the First Nations art area, which features nine painted totem poles. When the picnic in your backpack starts whispering your name, set up lunch at a park table under shady trees or on one of the public beaches you'll see along the path. This ride is no nice my family did it twice when we took our kids to Vancouver.



Day Two

After fabulous breakfast at your hotel (I'm looking at you, Fairmont Pacific Rim!), head to your next Vancouver destination: the [Capilano Suspension Bridge Park](#). This popular outdoor attraction will become increasingly crowded throughout the day, so go as early as possible to enjoy it without so many other tourists. The main event is the namesake Capilano Suspension bridge, originally constructed in 1889. 450 feet long, the bridge safely wobbles and sways 230 feet above the Capilano River. My favorite feature at the park is the Treetops Adventure, seven suspension bridges connecting to tree platforms, allowing you to walk high above the forest floor within this incredible coastal rainforest. You can easily spend several hours here, with options to explore the circular Cliffwalk, take a walk through the woods on ground level decking, or experience a live Raptors presentation (April – September).



With all that outdoor activity under your belt, it's time for lunch and Vancouver's landmark Chinatown is calling. Excellent dim sum awaits at [Jade Dynasty](#) on E. Pender Street or Chinese barbeque at [Chinatown BBQ](#). After lunch, enjoy a walk around this historic neighborhood, the largest designated Chinatown in Canada. Be sure to check out the Sam Kee building at 8 W. Pender St, the narrowest commercial building in the world!



To round out your afternoon, I recommend a mellow visit to the [Vancouver Aquarium](#). Located inside Stanley Park, the aquarium is Canada's largest and is easily enjoyed by all ages. B.C.'s Wild Coast Exhibit is my family's favorite experience there. From an observation deck, or through aquarium glass one level down, you can watch rescued seals and sea lions swimming, eating, lounging, and playing. The aquarium does a wonderful job educating visitors on coastal conservation and the marine life of the surrounding Pacific ocean.

For dinner, you simply must go to [Blue Water Café](#) in Yaletown (reservations required), one of my top 5 fave restaurants. This seafood oriented gem hits all the marks for food, service, wine selection, and ambiance. If that sounds too fancy after a long day of exploring, check out [Maruhachi Ra-Men](#) in the West End - walk ins only. You're done for the day, good night!

Day 3

This half-day agenda could also be applied to an afternoon arrival to Vancouver, before starting the listed itinerary for Day 1 the following morning. Grab yourself a cup of coffee and walk from your hotel to the waterfront in Coal Harbour, stretching from the edge of Stanley Park all the way to Canada Place, which you'll recognize by its unique white sails jutting from the roofline. Stroll along the harbor, where seaplanes take off and land, boats motor through traffic, and cruise ships come into port. There are plenty of benches along the way and you might even see a harbor seal or two. Who knows, you might find yourself inspired to take a seaplane tour!



Before you leave Vancouver, pay a visit to Gastown. The city's oldest neighborhood was founded in 1867 and is home to a charming and photo-worthy steam clock, which whistles on the quarter hour. Gastown has maintained its Victorian charm while evolving into a stylish, walkable destination for clothing boutiques, décor stores, art galleries and restaurants. Dining options abound, so before you hit the shops, head for brunch at [Ask for Luigi](#) or [Twisted Fork](#) - brunch served daily.

Where to Stay

Fairmont Pacific Rim

Fora Perks:

- Room upgrade on arrival, based on availability
- Early check-in & late check-out, subject to availability
- Daily complimentary breakfast for up to 2 guests
- Hotel/Resort credit to be spent during the stay
- A VIP Welcome

Rosewood Hotel Georgia

Fora Perks:

- Room upgrade on arrival, subject to availability
- Complimentary daily breakfast for two guests
- Hotel credit to be used during stay
- Early Check-In / Late Check-Out, subject to availability
- Complimentary Wi-Fi

Loden Hotel

Fora Perks:

- Room upgrade on arrival, based on availability
- Guaranteed 2pm late check-out
- Welcome treat in room on arrival
- Complimentary daily continental breakfast for up to 2 guests