

## **British Columbia**

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## Introduction

Canada's western-most province styles itself as "Beautiful British Columbia", and for good reason. Majestic mountains, dramatic fjords, dense rainforests, lovely lakes, and coastal variety.

Here are pictures from a visit to a small part of southern BC.

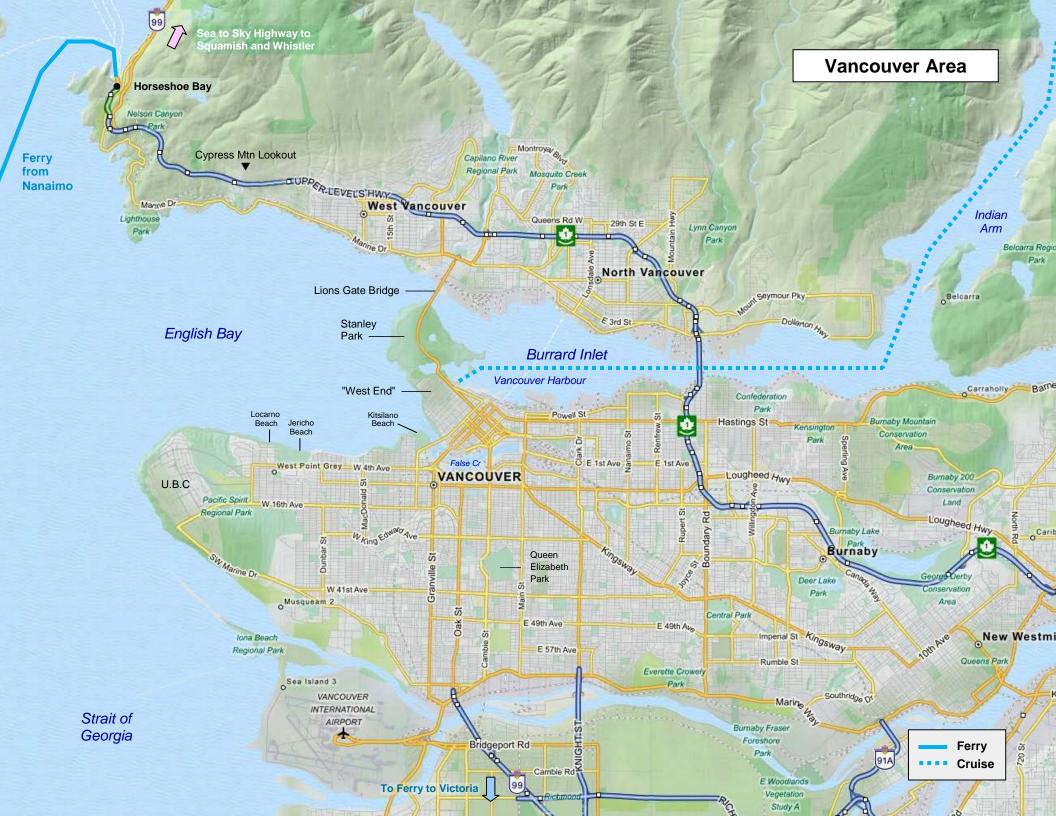
I worked in Vancouver for six months a long time ago, and visited fairly frequently on business after that, but hadn't been back since I started taking digital photos.

I was fortunate to be joined on these explorations by Chris Paton, a very good friend who lives in Vancouver and who contributed a lot of local insight to the development of our itinerary.

We were fortunate that we were spared any serious amount of rain but, as you'll see, we did have our share of cloudy days. Nevertheless, as you'll also see, there were some great days for photos as well.

The first section on Vancouver is primarily for those not familiar with the city. The truly stunning views are mostly found out of town in BC, and they show up here in the Excursions and Vancouver Island sections.







Vancouver

Welcome to Vancouver.
Vancouver is many things ...





Vancouver ... a popular tourist destination ...



Vancouver ... BC's prosperous commercial centre ...



... a collection of friendly neighbourhoods ... Vancouver



Vancouver ... a mix of coastal lifestyles ...



Vancouver and, increasingly, the home of the newly wealthy.



Vancouver

My base is in Vancouver's West End. We begin exploring at the harbour to the north, and then continue counter-clockwise.



Vancouver developed first as a port. The Burrard Inlet is a deep and sheltered channel, excellent for large oceangoing ships.



The Vancouver harbour port remains busy, now supplemented by container and other port facilities along the lower B.C. coast.



Port facilities on the north side of the Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver specialize in bulk materials handling and marine operations services.



The south shore has been redeveloped for mixed uses as heavy industry has relocated elsewhere.



Canada Place, completed in time for Expo 86, introduced innovative architecture with its fabric roofs resembling sails.



Canada Place has served as a convention centre and now also plays host to visiting cruise ships.



The new Vancouver Convention Centre has won awards for environmental design. It triples convention centre capacity and adds hotel, marina, and transportation facilities.



The living roof, seawater heating and cooling, on-site water treatment and fish habitat in the foundation make it one of the greenest convention centres in the world.



Vancouver Harbour also has a busy seaplane aerodrome, with float planes servicing Victoria, Nanaimo, and destinations throughout B.C.



The harbour seaplane terminal gives travellers immediate access to the city's business district, hotels, and convention centres.



The harbour also plays host to pleasure craft ...



... and marinas for megayachts. This one, *A2*, is registered in the Cayman Islands, owner not disclosed.



And, to service all these vessels, there's a floating gas station right in the heart of downtown Vancouver harbour.



Lions Gate Bridge The Lions Gate bridge, completed in 1938, connects the City of Vancouver to the North Shore communities of West Vancouver and North Vancouver.



Lions Gate Bridge The centre lane reverses direction to accommodate traffic patterns, but the bridge is one of several serious traffic bottlenecks in the Vancouver area.

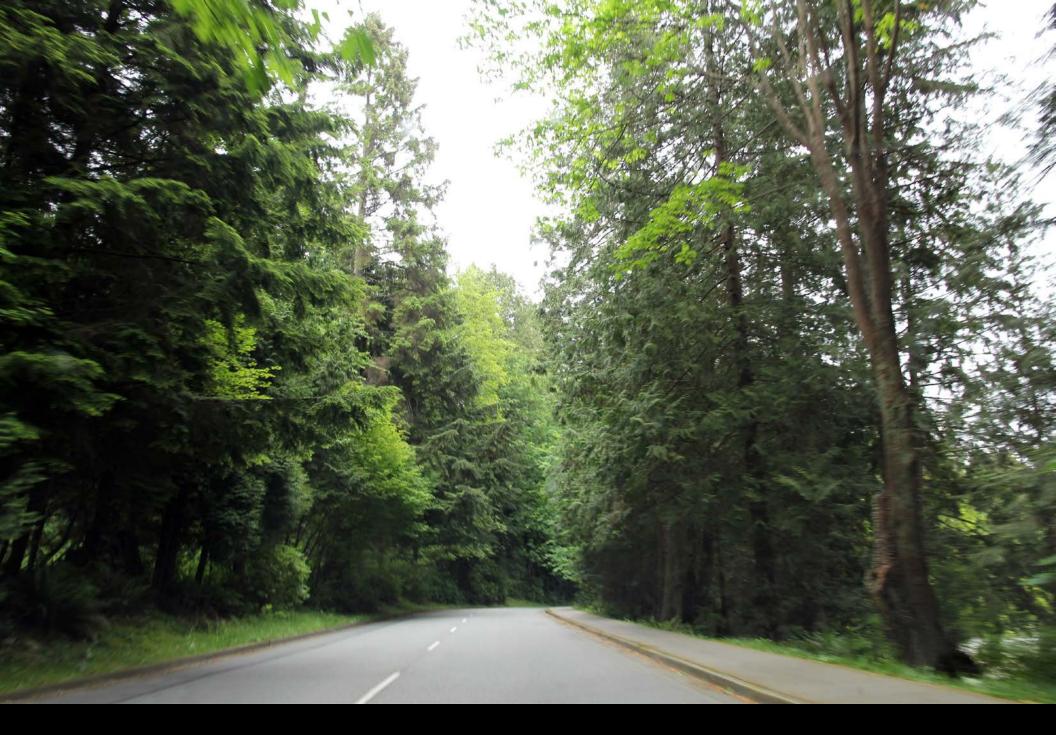


**Lions Gate Bridge** 

Proposals to replace or supplement the bridge have all been rejected. And there area no major transit expansion plans.



Stanley Park Stanley Park is a huge forested park that borders downtown Vancouver and is almost entirely surrounded by the waters of Vancouver Harbour and English Bay.



Stanley Park Unlike other large urban parks it is not the creation of a landscape architect but rather the evolution of a forest and urban space over many years.



Stanley Park The Hollow Tree is a monument to the original forest of giant trees. It is about 1,000 years old, possibly the oldest in the park, having survived extensive logging from 1865 to 1885.



Stanley Park The park's most popular feature with its 8 million annual visitors is the walking and cycling path that runs along the perimeter Seawall that protects the park from erosion.



Stanley Park Park Area: 1001 acres / 1.6 square miles / 4.0 km². Larger than New York's Central Park. Stanley Park was named "Top Park in the Entire World" by TripAdvisor in 2014.



Stanley Park Park features include beaches, a fresh water lake, a pool, formal gardens, forest trails, an aquarium, an outdoor theatre, a miniature railroad, and a variety of sports facilities.



**Stanley Park** There's even an oh-so-British Tea House on the west side of the park.



Stanley Park The Vancouver Rowing Club is successful in Canadian and Commonwealth competitions. It has medals from Olympics in Paris, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Rome, and Tokyo.



Stanley Park The Vancouver Rowing Club originated in 1886 and moved to Stanley Park in 1905. It now also has Yachting, Rugby, and Field Hockey divisions.



Stanley Park

The First Nations totem poles in Stanley Park are one of BC's most visited attractions.

The Parks Board has been collecting poles from remote locations in BC since the 1920s.





Stanley Park British Columbia has been inhabited for thousands of years. These towering First Nations monuments are one of the most recognizable cultural symbols of Western Canada.



False Creek is a large inlet the extends east from English Bay along the south side of downtown Vancouver.



False Creek The iconic little False Creek Ferries offer good sightseeing and picture taking opportunities.





False Creek ... the new high-rises and marinas of the Yaletown district ...



False Creek ... which seem to go on and on ...



False Creek ... displaying some of Vancouver's new-found prosperity.



False Creek Granville Island, tucked under the Granville Bridge, has been re-developed.

A few traditional industries remain, but ....



False Creek ... tourists and locals alike now come to Granville Island mainly to shop, eat, and be entertained.



False Creek Even Ocean Concrete, Granville Island's last major tie to its industrial past, has done its part for the transformation.



False Creek Sea Village, on the south-east side of Granville Island, is a collection of colourful floating houses that rise and fall with the tides.



False Creek

This geodesic dome at the east end of False Creek was created for Expo 86.

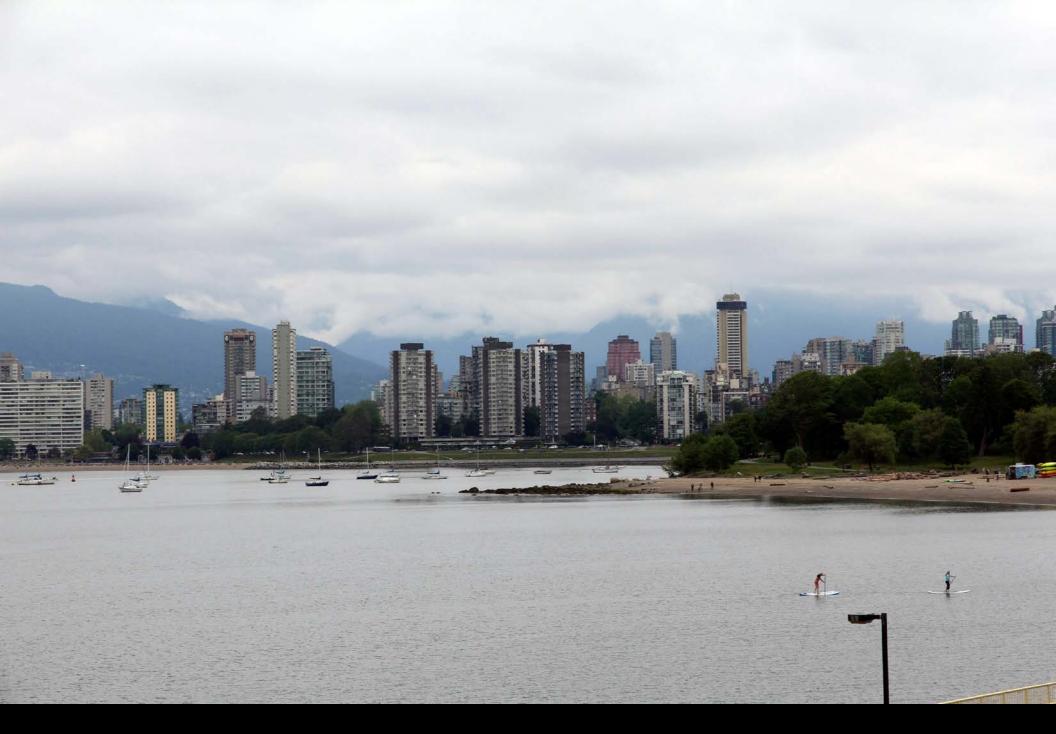
It now houses Science World 's interactive science exhibits and displays.



False Creek

BC Place served as the main stadium for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

It now features a cable-supported retractable roof, the largest of its kind.



**English Bay** Downtown Vancouver as seen from Kitsilano Beach.



**English Bay** Homes along exclusive Point Grey Road have long been among Vancouver's most expensive.









Queen

Queen Elizabeth Park, south of downtown and the highest point within the city, provides Elizabeth Park views of the park, the city, and (on a clear day) the mountains on the North Shore.



Queen Elizabeth Park



Queen Elizabeth Park **Quarry Garden** 



**Queen**The Bloedel Conservatory is a domed conservatory and aviary that houses three different tropical climate zones.



**Queen** More than 200 free-flying exotic birds and 500 exotic plants and flowers thrive in its temperature-controlled environment.



Queen Elizabeth Park

There are smaller birds too, but they don't pose.



Time to head out of town, north across the Lions Gate Bridge, and towards the Sea to Sky Highway.



First stop is a viewpoint part way up Cypress Mountain, north of the city of West Vancouver.

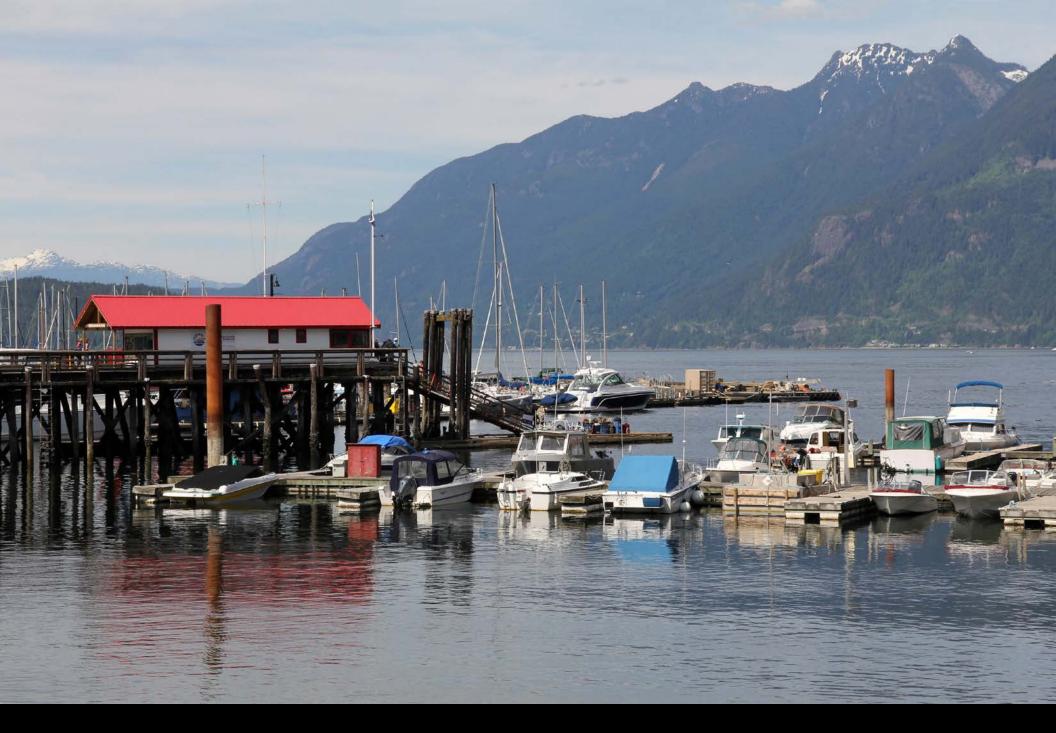




Looking south-west: English Bay, the University of British Columbia, the Strait of Georgia, and Vancouver Island in the distance.



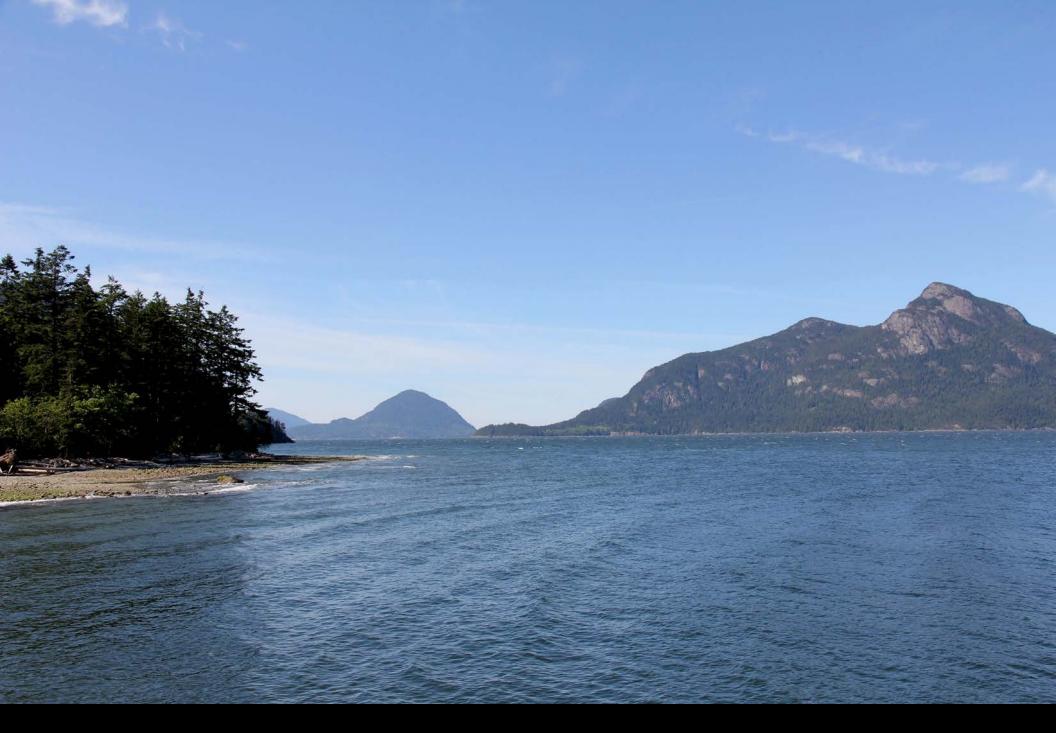
Horseshoe Bay is a community of about 1,000 permanent residents that sits at the southern end of the Sea to Sky Highway.



Visitors come to Horseshoe Bay by land and by sea to visit its shops and restaurants or just take in the scenery.



Horseshoe Bay is a major terminal for the BC Ferries which link the mainland to BC's various islands and to parts of the mainland without road access.



The lower end of the Sea to Sky Highway travels along the east coast of Howe Sound



The highway links Vancouver to the Whistler ski area and communities to the north.



Howe Sound is actually a network of fjords carved out of the Coast Mountains.



Porteau Cove is a departure point for scuba diving on artificial reefs sunk in the area.



This monster dump truck parked by the highway at Britannia Beach is intended to draw attention to the British Columbia Museum of Mining.

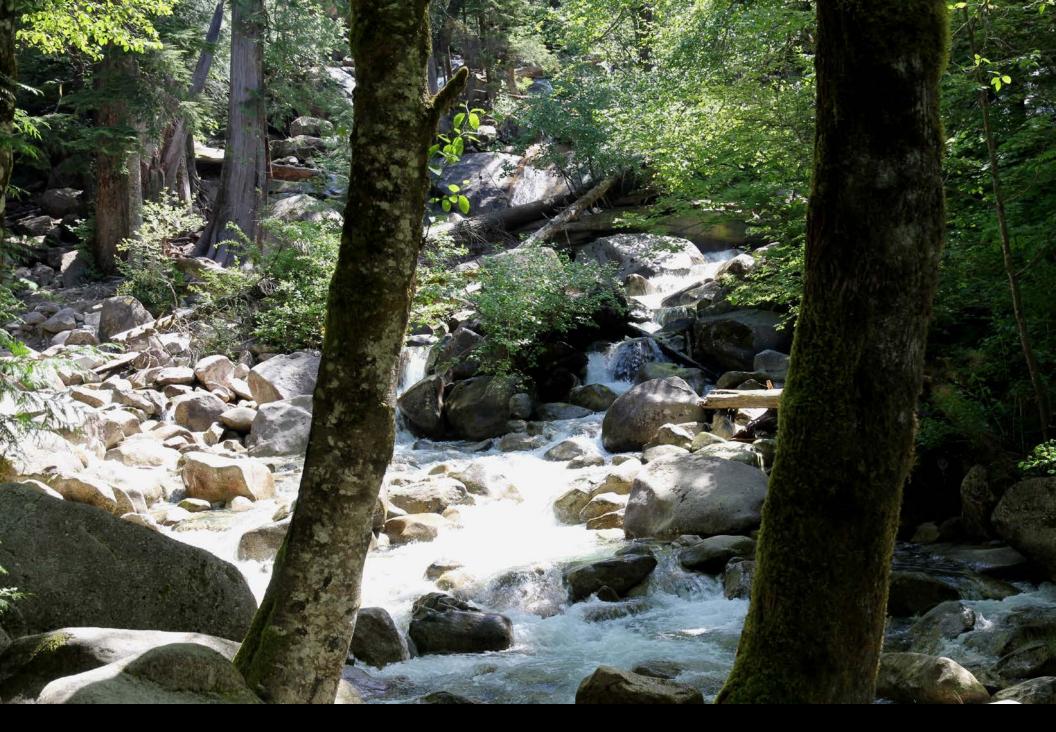


The mine is no longer operational, but visitors can tour underground and see the processing areas.



Shannon Falls is the third-highest waterfall in BC. Water falls from a height of 1,099 feet / 335 metres.





**Shannon Falls** 



Alice Lake looks green because its surface reflects the surrounding green forest.

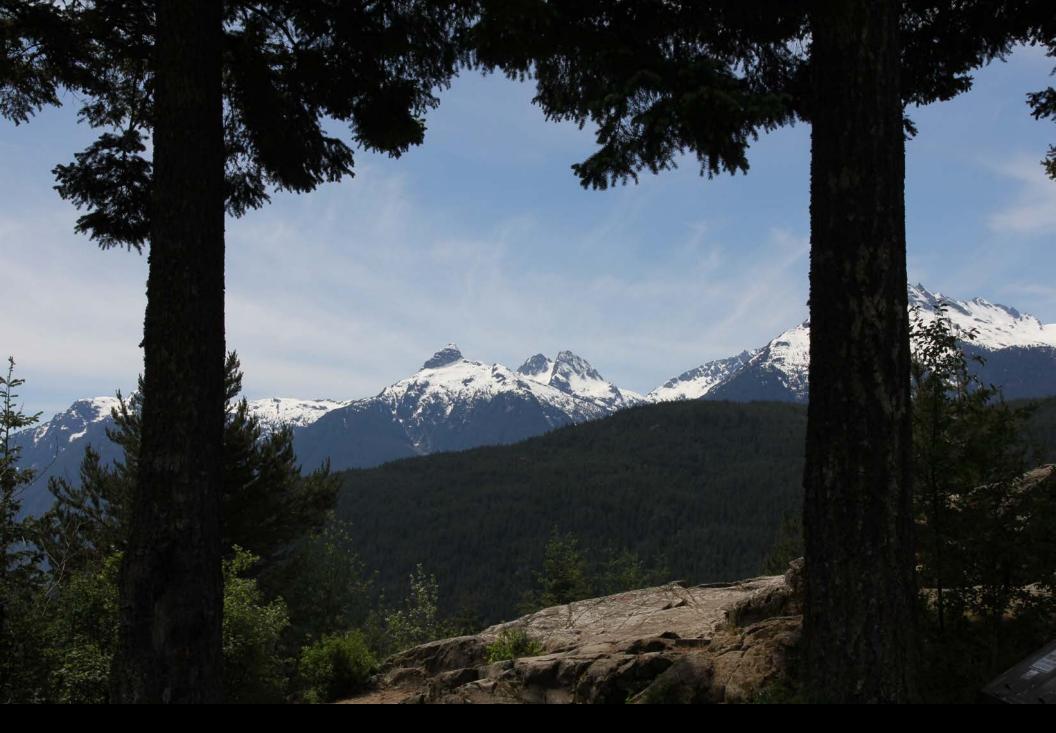


Alice Lake Park



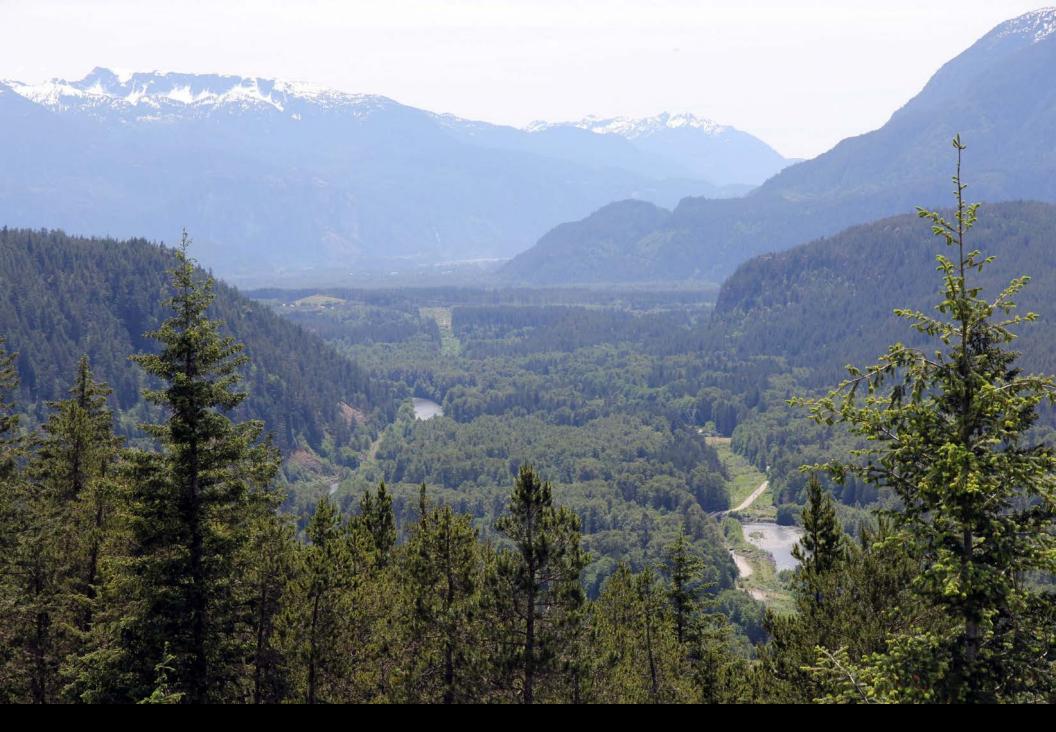


The Tantalus Viewpoint north of Squamish provides some of the most impressive sights in the region.



**Snow-capped Tantalus Mountains** 





Tantalus Viewpoint.
Satisfied, we head back south from here.



The West Coast Railway Heritage Park in Squamish preserves much of the region's railway history.



The museum presents a typical railway facility of the mid 20th century.









The museum's rolling stock collection represents several decades and a variety of operators.



Next we board the Harbour Princess (centre rear) for a four-hour cruise through the Burrard Inlet and then north into the Indian Arm fjord.



**Burrard Inlet** 





**Burrard Inlet** 



**Heading into the Indian Arm fjord** 







**Indian Arm. Coast Mountains.** 



Indian Arm. Welcome to Norway. Cruise



Indian Arm Residents here have no road access.
Cruise



Silver Falls is located about two-thirds of the way up Indian Arm on the west shoreline.



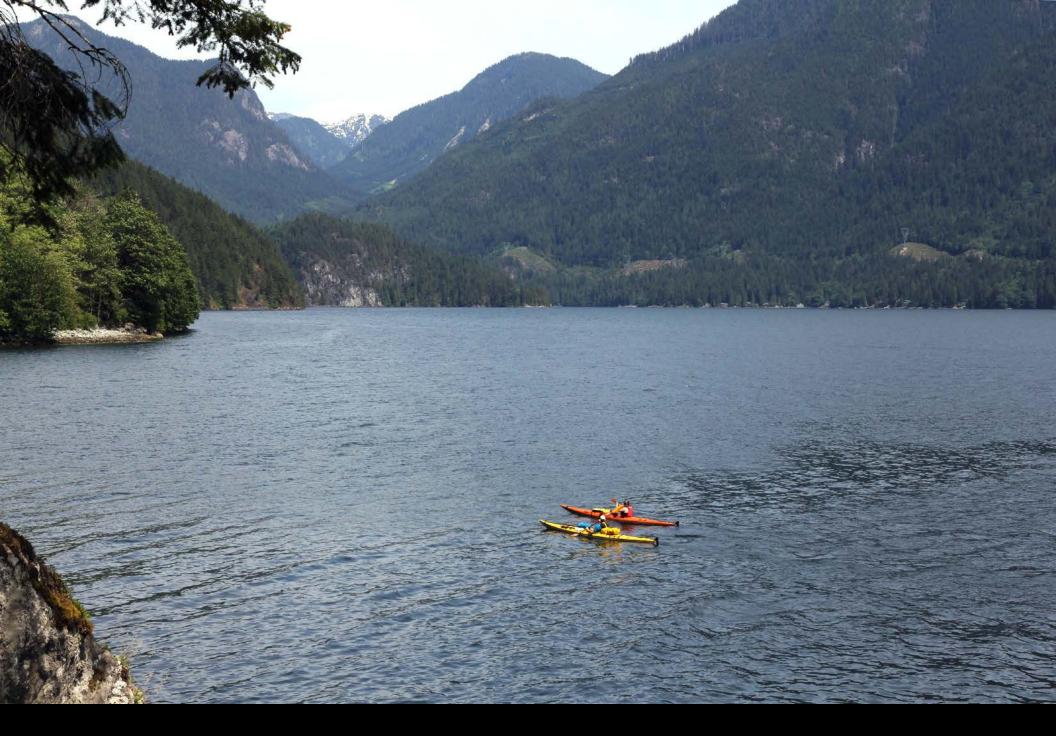
Silver Falls





**Indian Arm Cruise** 

The captain manoeuvred the ship amazingly close to the falls, without incident.



These two are headed further up, but we're turning back here.



I really love day cruises. Spectacular scenery. Unique vantage points. Armchair comfort.



Vancouver Island

Next we're off to Vancouver Island, via BC Ferry from Tsawwassen, south of Vancouver, to Victoria.



Victoria is the capital of BC.
Like Vancouver, it is a port.



Victoria The Empress Hotel is the queen of the inner harbour.



**Victoria** 

The Fairmont hotel chain is refurbishing the Empress and giving her a facelift.





Victoria Victoria's inner harbour is also a seaplane aerodrome.



Victoria Harbour-to-harbour seaplane service to Vancouver is very popular with business travellers.



Victoria We go sightseeing in Victoria's James Bay neighbourhood via pedicab.

Chris (left) and Renée, our pedaller-guide.





Victoria Victorian character homes abound here.

This was the home of famous Canadian painter and author Emily Carr.



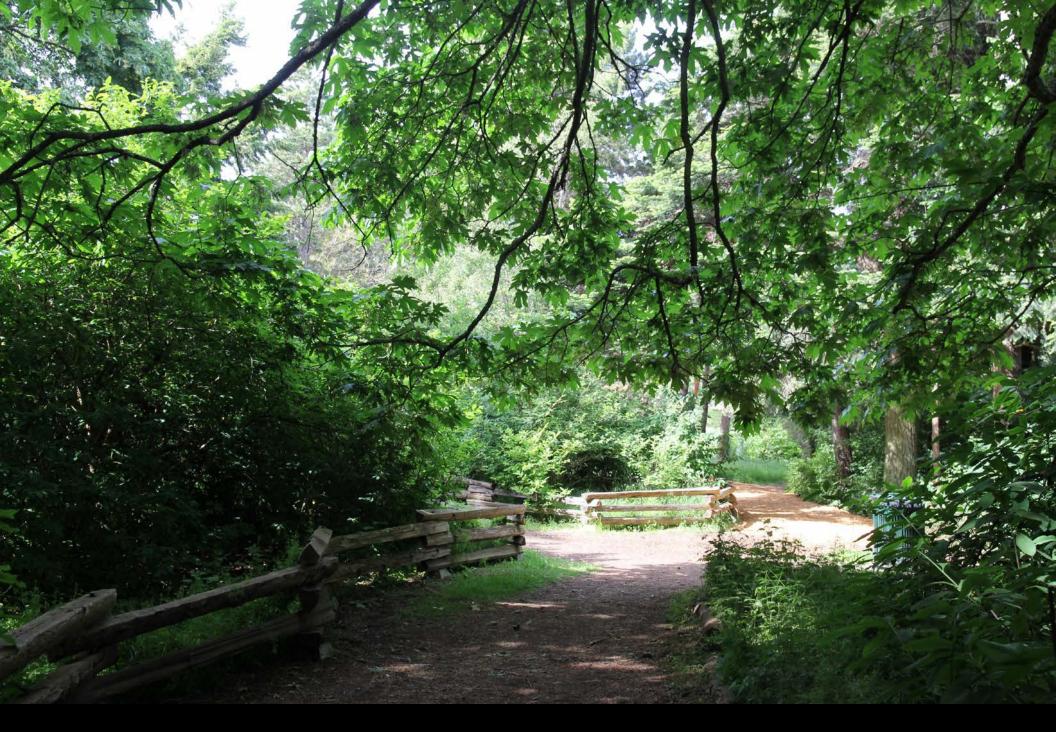
Victoria English influences are evident.



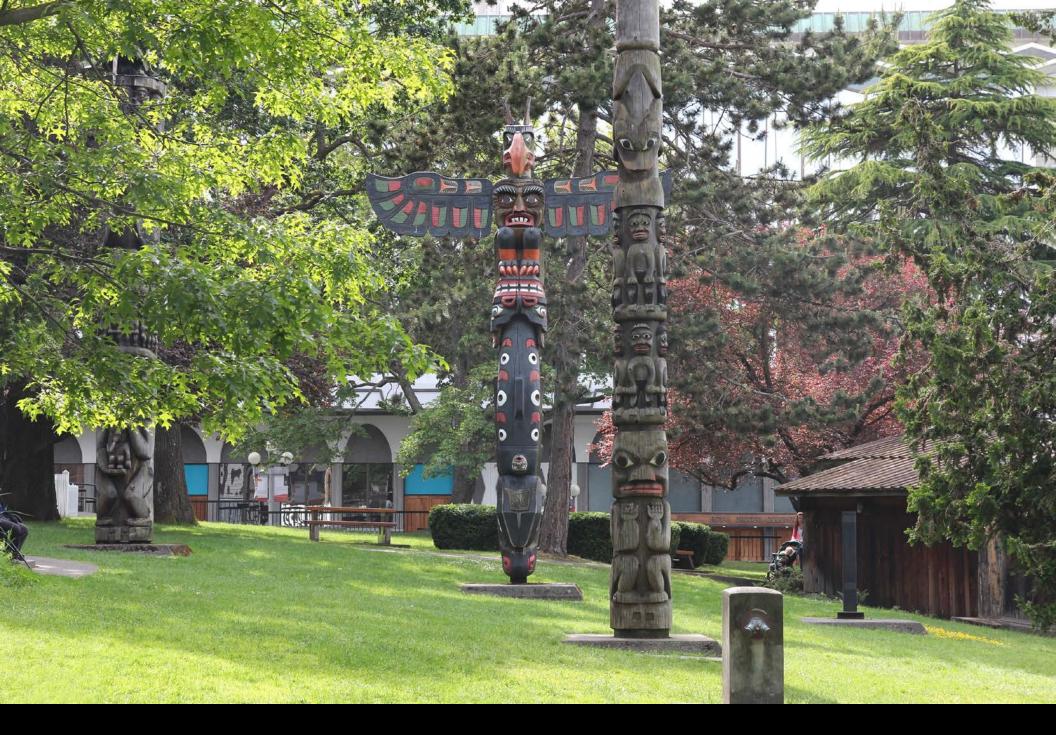
Victoria Some homes are less formal, more homey.



Victoria Tastefully decorated surfboard, showcased beside the stained glass.



Victoria Beacon Hill Park includes woodland and shoreline trails, playgrounds, a waterpark, playing fields, a petting zoo, tennis courts, ponds, and landscaped gardens.





Victoria This 127 foot / 39-metre totem pole by Mungo Martin was the world's tallest when erected in 1956.



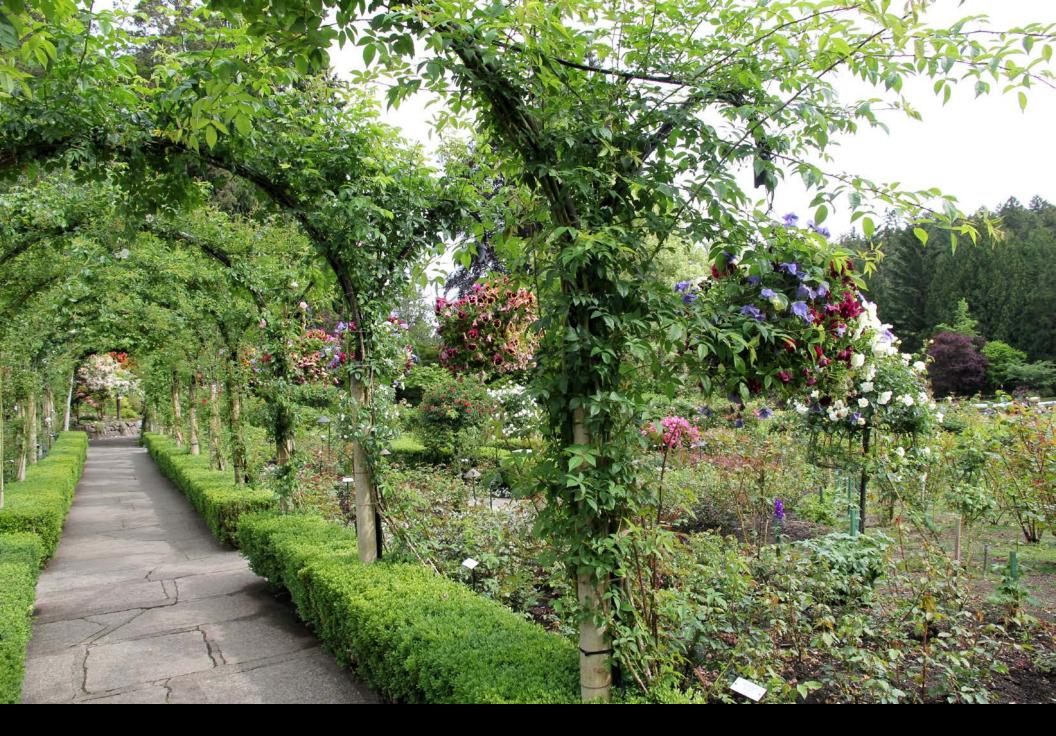
The Butchart Gardens north of Victoria cover over 55 acres / 22 hectares, and include the Sunken, Japanese, Rose, Italian, and Mediterranean Gardens.



The Sunken Gardens were devised to beautify a worked-out limestone quarry which had supplied a cement plant.



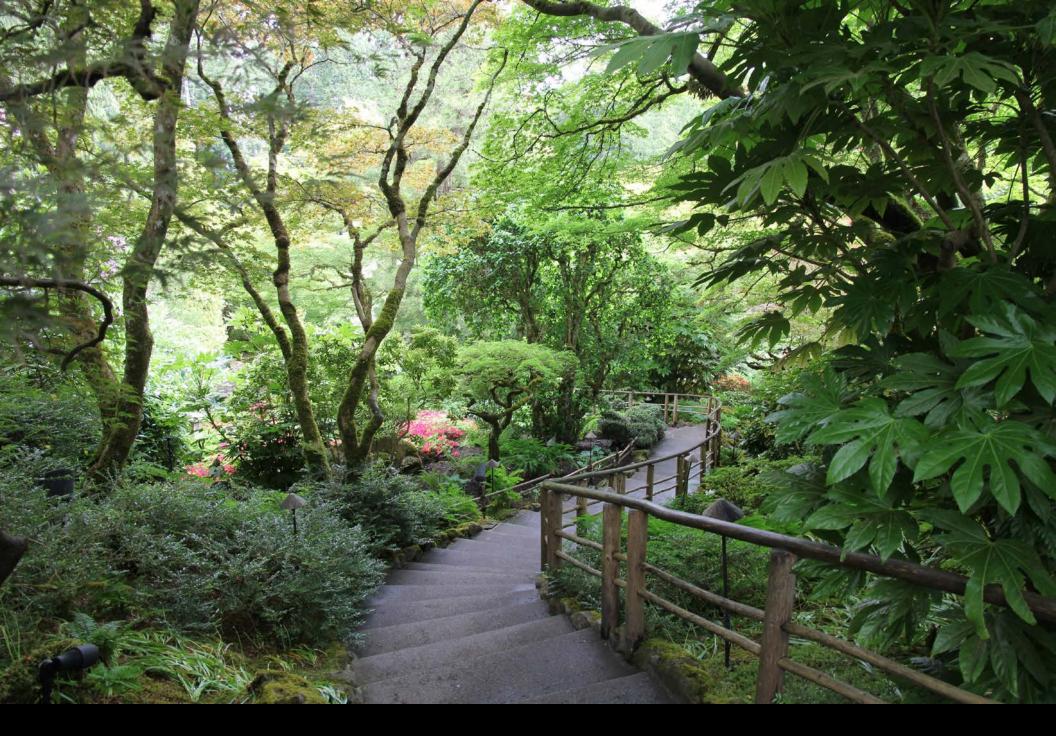








Japanese Garden









"The Malahat" is the term commonly applied to the 16 mile / 25 km portion of Trans Canada Highway 1 running along the west side of Saanich Inlet and to the region surrounding it.





The Salish Bear Pole by Salish carver Stan Modeste depicts Thunderbird at the top and, at the bottom, Grizzly Bear holding a mask.



Saanich Inlet



**Continuing north** 



**Chemainus** Wall m

Wall mural painting is not new, but its use as an economic development strategy to promote tourism for the small town of Chemainus was novel.



Chemainus The town of 3,000 faced the possible closure of its only major employer, a sawmill, and initiated a program to transform itself into a unique tourist destination.



Chemainus

The building murals were a key element in the revitalization program. Even the federal post office got with the program.









**Chemainus** 

The Chemainus project fueled spin-offs, some for tourism, some for beautification, in cities across Canada and in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.



Parksville In Parksville we're staying right on the coast, overlooking the Strait of Georgia.



Parksville The view from our digs at the Ocean Sands Resort on a cloudy afternoon.



Parksville And a very different view, of the mud flats, when the tide goes out.



Parksville Rathtrevor Beach Park is popular with campers. No bears or exotic wildlife here ...





Parksville French Creek Harbour is just north of town.



Parksville Commercial vessels operate from here ...



Parksville ... and all in all it's a busy place.



Parksville But not so busy that there isn't. time for some fun with Chris



Heading Home We take a ferry back to the mainland from Nanaimo and arrive here at Horseshoe Bay.



**Sunset** Sunset on May 16 from the shore at the Tea House in Stanley Park.







< End >

**British Columbia**