

DESTINATION GREATER
VICTORIA
BC, CANADA

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.

UPDATED APRIL 2024

Sustainability

Destination Greater Victoria is the first Destination Marketing Organization in North America to achieve Climate Positive designation. Destination Greater Victoria is proudly certified Climate Positive by Ostrom Climate and Synergy Enterprises. In March 2023, Greater Victoria became Biosphere certified, a prestigious tourism designation. Twelve of our members are Biosphere Certified, including the Victoria Conference Centre. A further 56 members are Biosphere Committed.

When you visit Victoria, you're met with green initiatives right out of the gate! New to the Victoria International Airport, YYJ, is a native species pollinator garden with more than 2,000 flora planted in 1,100 square metres of garden to help pollinators thrive.



Accessibility

Victoria recently completed an accessibility audit to ensure travellers of all abilities can enjoy this beautiful city. What makes Greater Victoria special is the ease with which travellers of all abilities can access our world class activities, luxurious accommodations, and elegant dining options.

Victoria International Airport Launches Accessibility Initiative MagnusCards

As part of World Autism Month, 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. MagnusCards is particularly useful for visual learners, and anyone who can receive help from structured visual guidance can benefit from the app. MagnusCards can support a variety of travellers, including Autistic, Elderly, Neurotypical children and teens, Down syndrome, acquired brain injury and English as a second language. 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

Explore Songhees

“əyʔ skʷéčəl “good day” The Songhees Nation welcomes all visitors to Lekwungen Traditional Territory to partake in meaningful Indigenous cultural experiences. The Songhees Wellness Centre is the cultural hub where people and traditions come to meet. It offers incredible views, an art gallery + cafe and full-service event facilities for over 600 people.

Established in 2008, the Seven Signs of the Lekwungen is an interpretive walkway along the Inner Harbour and surrounding areas that honours the art, history and culture of the Coast Salish people who have resided in the Victoria area for hundreds of years.



GETTING HERE AND GETTING AROUND



Porter Airlines

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

Kenmore Air

Starting May 16th 2024, there will be a new seaplane service flight time from **Friday Harbor Marina (San Juan Island) to Victoria Inner Harbour**. This 30-minute flight will help bolster the connection more with harbor to harbour walkability. Shifting their YYJ – Friday Harbor airport Kenmore Air Express wheeled service from Friday Harbor Airport over to servicing direct between YYJ and Boeing Field (from which we offer a shuttle transfer service to SeaTac airport for a small fee). These are two important service shifts as we see Victoria demand continuing on a strong growth path as well as maximizing opportunity with our Alaska Airlines partnership through SeaTac.





Helijet

Helijet International announced plans to add Canada's first order for an electric, vertical-takeoff aircraft to add to its fleet of passenger and cargo helicopters. The ALIA aircraft will provide quick, quiet, and more efficient landings and takeoffs from hospitals and other emergency zones. Anticipated by 2026 for private and commercial flights.

Harbour Air

The Harbour Air ePlane announced that the first direct all-electric point to point test flight has been completed. The historic De Havilland Beaver, which was completely retrofitted in 2019 to operate using 100% electricity flew 45 miles in 24 minutes. The aircraft left their terminal on the Fraser River adjacent to YVR and landed in Pat Bay adjacent to YYJ. This is a major milestone in the advancement of all-electric commercial flights.



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE



100th Anniversary Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary

2023 marked the 100th year anniversary of the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary is the oldest and largest in BC, along with Esquimalt Lagoon and Shoal Harbour Bird Sanctuary.

HOTELS & ACCOMMODATION

Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour - 20th anniversary

Celebrating their 20th anniversary in 2024, Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour is an oasis of elegant style and sought-after amenities in the heart of downtown Victoria. Situated in a prime location steps away from the Inner Harbour, the hotel provides excellent access to the very best our city has to offer.



Holiday Inn Victoria - Elk Lake

In 2023, The Holiday Inn Victoria - Elk Lake fully renovated 71 guest rooms (with plans to add 64 guest rooms in the near future). The hotel is centrally located in Saanich between Victoria International Airport (YYJ) and the bustling Victoria downtown area.

Wild Renfrew Seaside Cottages NEW FOREST VIEW STUDIO AVAILABLE JANUARY 2024

With unique and special features such as an outdoor shower, outdoor jetted tub, private patio and a gas fire-pit, these little extras make for a vacation never to be forgotten. This studio sits on the edge of a little forest, located away from all of our other units, granting a private and peaceful evening and night.





Coast Victoria Hotel & Marina by APA

Coast Victoria guest room renovations commenced to offer guests an elevated Refreshingly Local™ experience with a focus on comfort, intuitively designed rooms and suites, and unparalleled service. Estimated completion spring 2024.

The Vic, Ascend Hotel Collection

Opened in 2023, the Vic Hotel is a boutique hotel located near the stunning Selkirk Trestle, featuring upscale, spacious, apartment-style suites with rainfall showers, refrigerators, microwaves, and kitchenettes. Also offering pet-friendly Gorge Waterway accommodations. Don't forget to check out their games room! Fun for the whole family.



Fairmont Empress

The newly redesigned Fairmont Gold at Fairmont Empress, the brand's exclusive 'hotel within a hotel' experience, re-opened in summer 2023, which also marked the Empress' 115th anniversary. The expanded Fairmont Gold Lounge is located on the first floor of the heritage building with a private lounge and terrace that features dedicated concierge service. Fairmont Gold is designed to fulfill the needs of discerning travellers, ensuring their stay is nothing short of unforgettable. The reimagined Gold Floor and guestrooms celebrate both the history and natural beauty of the west coast, and elevates the historical property further into a new era of modern luxury.

Abigail's Hotel

Tucked away in a gorgeous neighbourhood just three blocks from downtown Victoria. Abigail's Hotel mixes historic charm and modern luxury and recently expanded to add eight new luxury guestrooms.

Abigail's Hotel has received outstanding recognition at the 2023 Trip Advisor Traveler's Choice Awards for hotels:

- #1 Best Small Hotel in Canada
- #11 Best Small Hotel in the World
- #2 Best Hotel for Sleep in the World



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.

Delta Hotel by Marriott Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort

The Delta Hotels by Marriott Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort is located in Victoria's Inner Harbour with stunning ocean views. A large renovation of the entire hotel's 240 guestrooms was completed in May 2023.



HEALTH & WELLNESS



HAVN Saunas - Lounge

HAVN announced the opening of their lounge space, providing an additional indoor space for relaxation and connection. Every element of the lounge has been meticulously designed to enhance your experience. From the textures to the colors and shapes, each detail harmoniously blends with natural elements, evoking a profound sense of presence and tranquility. Their focus is dedicated to crafting a comfortable, relaxing, and inspiring lounge environment, filled with books and comfortable spaces.

HAVN Saunas

HAVN is a floating park-like environment on the edge of Victoria's Inner Harbour. Lush green spaces, cold pools, hot tubs, and hand-built saunas bring us together for a vibrant self-care experience. Located on a 44-meter marine barge built in 1943 that was originally used as a floating wartime workshop for welders and other tradesman.



Wildwood Saunas

Wildwood Saunas recently found a new home at the scenic Bilston Creek Lavender Farm in Metchosin - July 2023. This relaxing 90-minute wood-burning Sauna and Cold Plunge Cycle features cold plunge tubs, a designated relaxation area, and cold outdoor showers, each with a window framing the views of Metchosin's lush forest.

ATTRactions

Victoria Butterfly Garden – juvenile Cuvier’s dwarf caiman

The Victoria Butterfly Gardens (VBG) is proud to announce a significant addition to its jungle experience with the acquisition of a Cuvier’s Dwarf Caiman, the smallest living New World crocodilian. Javier, the caiman, is being cared for by the Victoria Butterfly Gardens on behalf of Environment and Climate Change Canada. The animal was discovered being held illegally without the necessary permits. While legal proceedings are underway to determine its future, VBG will serve as its temporary home.



The Butchart Gardens

In 2024, The Butchart Gardens celebrates its 120th anniversary. A National Historic Site of Canada, the gardens envelope guests in lush greenery and colourful blooms, or sensational seasonal illuminations after dark.

New Era for Point Ellice House

The Province has chosen the Forager Foundation as interim operator of Point Ellice House to ensure the heritage site remains open to the public while plans are underway to find a long-term site manager.





Underground Donut Tour

In August 2023, Victoria's newest food tour launched with a focus exclusively on everyone's favourite pastry – donuts! Taking you to 4 of the best donut shops in Victoria, learn about the history of each of the shops, the neighbourhood and greater Victoria while enjoying a delicious treat.

Victoria Cannabis Tours

Vancouver Island's first cannabis tour company opened on April 20th, 2023, with a mission to provide unique and unforgettable experiences for cannabis enthusiasts and curious explorers alike. Embark on a captivating driving adventure through Vancouver Island's cultural landscape, enriched by ocean vistas and mountain views. Cruise along scenic routes, explore charming streets, and discover hidden gems while enjoying your cannabis in a 100% legal, safe, and professional environment.



ART, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Chinese Canadian Museum - Fan Tan Alley Exhibit

"First Steps: Chinese Canadian Journeys in Victoria", is a new temporary exhibition that highlights important starting points for Chinese Canadians in Victoria. Examples of intergenerational resilience and agency are shared through stories of community support, entrepreneurship, and personal accomplishment.

They were profiled in season 7 of *Samantha Brown's Places to Love*.





Royal BC Museum – New Exhibit

Stonehenge Exhibit:

May 10, 2024–January 5, 2025

Featuring 400+ ancient artifacts along with archaeological insight and cutting-edge scientific research, this exhibition explores this iconic World Heritage Site. Working from what remains of the world's only lintelled henge, archaeologists have studied the people and communities who built Stonehenge 4,500–5,000 years ago.

25th anniversary of Ska & Reggae Festival

June 19–23, 2024

The annual Victoria Ska Fest is a diverse music showcase featuring the best reggae, ska, dub, jazz, dancehall, and punk from across the globe. A family-friendly event, it's the largest and longest running event of its kind in North America. Located in Victoria's downtown at different venues, the festival gives everyone a chance to discover and rediscover all kinds of sounds. 2024 will have even more significance than other Victoria Ska & Reggae Festivals, commemorating their 25th Anniversary.



ENROUTE TOP NEW RESTAURANTS OF THE YEAR 2023



Marilena Cafe + Raw Bar

Toptable Group has opened their first restaurant in Victoria, which happens to be Executive Chef Kristian Eligh's hometown.

The Marilena team is dedicated to delivering unforgettable dining experiences through the passion of award-winning chefs and dedicated staff.

Chef Eligh has crafted a menu that draws inspiration from memorable West Coast cuisine with an emphasis on local and globally sourced seafood.

The Ugly Duckling

New in 2023, Ugly Duckling is a fine dining restaurant that takes its inspiration from the intersection between Vancouver Island's magical terroir and the rich cultural heritage of North America's first Chinatown.

Its experiential dining is built around two promises: to serve only those things which they have made by hand; and to work really, really hard to make guests smile.





OEB Breakfast Co.

OEB Breakfast Co. officially opened their doors in Victoria, March 2024. They pride themselves on a vision that supports their people – from farming partners to chefs, managers, employees, and finally, their incredible guests. They aim to invest in, educate and broaden horizons with every connection they make. OEB menu is purposeful, filled with items that simply can't be made at home, balanced by lighter fare and vegan options. OEB pushes the culinary boundaries of breakfast food to bring you the best in quality and craftsmanship.

Block Kitchen + Bar

Block Kitchen + Bar opened in 2023, in Victoria, offering a dynamic, Global menu with Asian flair, creative cocktails, an extensive wine list and local beers, all in the heart of Victoria.



Steve's Poke Bar

Steve's Poke Bar opened in Vic West and Langford in December 2023. Steve wanted to preserve the method and traditional way of serving authentic Hawaiian Poké, the way he grew up with poké, with the option of adding various toppings to complete a healthy meal.

Kahuna

The partners, who opened the Hawaiian-themed Aloha Bowls and Kahuna Burger on Kenneth Street in downtown Duncan in 2021, opened the Kahuna restaurant at 515 Chatham St. near downtown Victoria on Oct. 27, and held its grand opening on Nov. 1, 2023.



Good Ovening

Established in 2023, Good Ovening restaurant has been a beacon of innovation in the culinary landscape. Rooted in a passion for promoting healthier dining choices, Biosphere Committed Good Ovening takes pride in deviating from the norm. They specialize in serving oven-roasted, wholesome chicken, providing a delightful departure from the traditional deep-fried options commonly found in Korea.

Shuck Taylor's

Shuck Taylor's is a new oyster house that opened end of September 2023. With a focus on fresh shellfish, their menu is expected to change with the tides. Local oyster and seafood master, Jess Taylor, began by running his own catering business, Wandering Mollusk. He's excited to now operate a permanent location where his passion for local and quality internationally selected oysters and seafood can attract customers right to the heart of downtown Victoria.





Floyd's Diner Gorge

The new location of Floyd's Diner officially opened on February 15th, 2024! Home of the Mahoney, their new location resides at The Vic, Ascend Hotel Collection. Established in 2004, Floyd's Diner is a fun and friendly, family-oriented atmosphere for all to enjoy. Feeling lucky? Order The Mahoney, you'll have the chance to flip a coin for double or nothing!

Rudi

Rudi opened in late 2023. Rudi is short for Rudolph, a traditional German name that is inspired by owner, Jesse Dame's, grandfather. Rudi is a place to come together and share food, drinks and stories. Expect a menu inspired by traditional European cuisine and beloved family recipes passed down through generations – with tweaks and new ideas added over time.



Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub – 40th Anniversary

Canada's first purpose-built gastro brewpub celebrates their 40th anniversary in 2024. Operating since 1984, they have always supported farm to table eating, and have partnered with over 35 local farmers and producers to supply their ingredients, while bringing Victoria's largest selection of traditionally crafted brews and pub fare with a local twist.

Clive's Classic Lounge

Clive's Classic Lounge, located in the Chateau Victoria Hotel and Suites completed renovations April 2024, aligning with the celebration of their 15th anniversary. Clive's Classic Lounge has been recognized as the Whiskey Hotel Bar of the Year 2023 by Whiskey Magazine's Icons of Whiskey annual awards.



Swift Brewing & The Good Time Tasting Room

In May 2023, CRAFT Beer Market upped their offering with the opening of an on-site brewery: Swift Brewing and Good Time Tasting Room. Swift rocks a distinctly retro vibe, and their Raspberry Beret is a perfect summer sipper. Located in the heart of the harbour, it's a place for you to enjoy a super comfy setting, combining the best of the old with the convenience and comfort of the new.

Duo Café at Inn at Laurel Point

Coffee culture is alive and well in Victoria. Inn at Laurel Point will up the coffee scene with a new café for guests and locals alike. Opened February 2024, featuring their freshly baked croissants (the best in the city) and the growl of the espresso machine, Duo Café Bakery will entice those looking for the perfect takeaway coffee or a great local spot to meet friends.





The Art of Slow Food

The Art of Slow Food is an exclusively gluten free bakery & cafe. Handcrafted gluten free sourdough breads and treats fresh daily, and source all the cafe ingredients locally. The famous sourdough is the heart of the bakery and is vegan and free of all common allergens. Using local organic ingredients and traditional methods of food preparation to make unique, delicious creations that nourish your body.

20th Anniversary Sea Cider Farm & Ciderhouse

Sea Cider is a family-owned orchard and ciderhouse. Celebrating their 20th anniversary of growing organic cider apples and producing award-winning apple cider.



Awards, Accolades & Designations



- #1 Best City in the World - *Condé Nast Traveler's Reader's Choice Awards*
- #1 Best Midsize City in the World - *Travel Awaits*
- #1 Most Walkable Destination Outside of the US - *Travel Awaits*
- #1 Friendliest City in the World - *Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards (US)*
- #2 Sustainable Destination in North America - *Global Destination Sustainability Index*
- #2 Favourite City in Canada - *Travel + Leisure Readers' 5 Favourite Cities in Canada*
- #3 Friendliest City in the World - *Condé Nast Traveler's Reader's Choice Awards*
- #4 Best Island in the World (Vancouver Island) - *Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards*
- #8 Best City in the World for Food - *Condé Nast Traveler's Reader's Choice Awards*
- *Sunset Magazine's 2023 Travel Award Winner "Best City Getaways"*
- *Good Housekeeping 2024 Family Travel Awards Must See City*
- *Canada's Most Livable City - The Globe and Mail*