



The impressively grand Fairmont Empress hotel.



Stroll around the colourful Butchart Gardens.

For more info and to plan your trip, see www.HelloBC.com.au.



TO GO

To get to Victoria, fly to Vancouver then either take the ferry (bferries.com), a domestic flight (aircanada.com) or a seaplane to Victoria's Inner Harbour (harbourair.com).



Tempting edibles at Victoria's Fort Street shops.

Vancouver is already on many bucket lists, being the gateway for Inside Passage cruises, the legendary Rocky Mountaineer train and the Great Bear Rainforest. But a mere 90-minute ferry ride away lies the quaint harbour city of Victoria, on neighbouring Vancouver Island. Here are four experiences you just shouldn't miss.



Head to Canada to see Vancouver's cute neighbour

Beautiful VICTORIA

EXPLORE FIRST NATIONS CULTURES

With wilderness hotspots, excellent dining, incredible gardens and an intriguing cultural history, Victoria is packed with attractions.

In fact, the whole of Vancouver Island is rich in indigenous culture with countless sites to explore.

Start with a visit to the Royal BC Museum, which has permanent exhibitions showcasing First Nations communities like the Kwakwaka'wakw, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Gitksan, Haida and Nuuchahnulth peoples. The Totem Hall is jaw-dropping. royalbcmuseum.bc.ca.

CRUISE FOR WILDLIFE

Vancouver Island and Salish Sea waters are teeming with marine life, and a cruise is the best way to take in the area.

Each day, Prince of Whales offers multiple cruises to explore the area and see sea otters, bald eagles, Steller sea lions, elephant seals, harbour porpoises, humpbacks and killer whales.

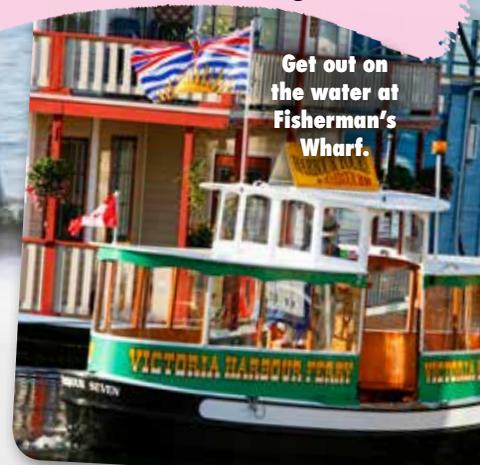
It's an unmissable wildlife experience you'll want to do more than once during your stay, so plan to make a day (or two!) of it. princeofwhales.com.

STAY AT THE EMPRESS

Sprawling like an Edwardian chateau alongside Victoria's Inner Harbour, nothing can

prepare you for the grandeur of the Fairmont Empress (think: an ivy covered facade, vast ballrooms, opulent decor, lush gardens). Since it was built in 1908, this historic hotel has been favoured by celebs and royals, including Queen Elizabeth, Prince Edward and King George VI.

The standard rooms have all the plush-luxe touches, but if you're ready to be seriously spoiled, book into Gold Class for exclusive services and extra attention. Even if you're staying elsewhere, it's worth booking in for a Victorian style afternoon tea served in the historic Lobby Lounge. Fancy! fairmont.com/empress-victoria.



Get out on the water at Fisherman's Wharf.

DISCOVER BUTCHART

The stunning Butchart Gardens are a 22-hectare kaleidoscope of colour all year round and are within easy reach of the city.

Founded by Jennie Butchart in 1909, the gardens have since been designated as a national historic site. Every year around a million visitors make the trip to explore its stunning landscapes. Don't miss the Rose Garden, the Sunken Garden and the Italian Garden (or its gelateria). butchartgardens.com.