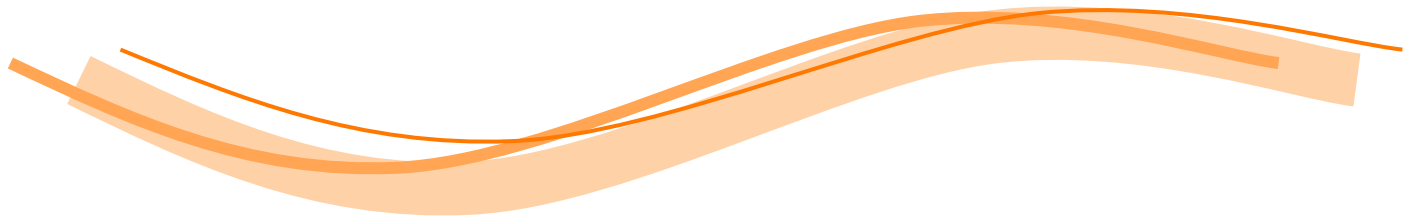




# BUTCHART GARDENS & VICTORIA, BC





<b>BUTCHART GARDENS</b>	<p>Fifty-five acres of wonderful floral display are open to the public, offering spectacular views from the many paths that meander through the four main gardens. In 1904, Jennie Butchart began to beautify a worked-out quarry site left behind from her husband's pioneering efforts in the manufacture of Portland cement. The family's commitment to horticulture and hospitality spans 100 years, and continues to delight visitors from all over the world. From the exquisite Sunken Garden to the charming Rose Garden, the gracious traditions of the past are still maintained in one of the loveliest corners in the world.</p> <p>Canada's most visited privately owned attraction, with nearly a million visitors a year, welcomed its 50 millionth guest in October 2005, setting an historic milestone for the 103-year-old attraction and the province.</p>																																																																		
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<b>Location</b>	<p>The Gardens are located on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, about 21 km north of the city of Victoria, at 800 Benvenuto Avenue, Brentwood Bay. There are directional signs on all major roads. Route 75 bus takes you there from Victoria.</p>																																																																		

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<p><b>History</b></p>	<p>In 1888, near his birthplace, Owen Sound, Ontario, the former dry goods merchant, Robert Pim Butchart, began manufacturing Portland cement. By the turn of the century he had become a highly successful pioneer in this burgeoning North American industry. Attracted to the West Coast of Canada by rich limestone deposits vital for cement production, he built a new factory at Tod Inlet, on Vancouver Island. There, in 1904, he and his family established their home.</p> <p>As Mr. Butchart exhausted the limestone in the quarry near their house, his enterprising wife, Jennie, conceived an unprecedented plan for refurbishing the bleak pit that resulted. From farmland nearby she requisitioned tons of top soil, had it brought to Tod Inlet by horse and cart, and used it to line the floor of the abandoned quarry. Little by little, under Jennie Butchart's personal supervision, the abandoned quarry bloomed as the spectacular Sunken Garden.</p> <p>Mr. Butchart took much pride in his wife's remarkable work. A great hobbyist, he collected ornamental birds from all over the world. He kept ducks in the Star Pond, noisy peacocks on the front lawn, and a curmudgeon of a parrot in the main house. He enjoyed training pigeons at the site of the present Begonia Bower, and had many elaborate bird houses stationed throughout Jennie's beautiful gardens. By 1908, reflecting their world travels, the Butcharts had created a Japanese Garden on the sea-side of their home. Later an Italian Garden was created on the site of their former tennis court, and a fine Rose Garden replaced a large kitchen vegetable patch in 1929. The renown of Mrs. Butchart's gardening quickly spread. By the 1920's more than fifty thousand people came each year to see her creation. In a gesture toward all their visitors, the hospitable Butcharts christened their estate "Benvenuto", the Italian word for "Welcome".</p>
<p><b>Contacts</b></p>	<p>Telephone: 1-888-824-6699          Website: <a href="http://www.butchartgardens.com/CFRB">www.butchartgardens.com/CFRB</a>          Tickets can be bought online          Other telephone numbers: 1-250-652-5256 (General info) 888-824-7318 (Toll Free) 1-250-652-8222 (Dining Reservations)          Mailing Address is Box 4010 Victoria BC Canada V8X 3X4</p>
<p><b>Children</b></p>	<p>Make it a day at The Gardens where you can spend some quality time together with your kids. Enjoy the fresh air and the brilliant colours in surroundings which won't challenge little feet or strollers. See our totem poles which were carved by artists of the Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations and statues collected by Butchart family members on various trips overseas. The Ross Fountain pond looks great any time of the year and any time of the day or night.</p>
<p><b>Entertainment</b></p>	<p>Each summer The Gardens complements the sights and scents with a festival of daily concerts and events. The open air concerts take place on the Concert Lawn stage. Come sit on a bench, or bring a blanket and sit on the lawn. You'll enjoy the on-stage performances and, on toe-tapping music nights, the performances by visitors' children who just have to frolic on the lawn. Even the swallows seem determined to perform with stellar overhead acrobatics.</p> <p>On summer Saturday nights, after the concert, the excitement builds for the spectacular Fireworks show. The pyrotechnic displays are synchronized, amazingly by hand firing, with music. Come with a blanket to sit upon and enjoy a show you are unlikely to see unequalled anywhere in North America.</p> <p>Christmastime brings not only ice skating, the 12 Days of Christmas displays, decorations and marvelous lighting, but also choral music, festive brass and entertainment for kids.</p>
<p><b>The Gardens</b></p>	<p>The Sunken Garden – in the old quarry          The Italian Garden – transformed in 1926 from a tennis court!</p>

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	<p>The Star Pond – originally a duck pond!          The Japanese Garden – Japanese maples: beautiful in the fall          The Rose Garden – 6600 rose plants!          The Begonia Bower – always colourful</p>
<p><b>Best Times to Visit</b></p>	<p>During the month of July and into August, the changing beds of annuals, each supplying non-stop colour, welcome the perennials to the show. The roses in all their different forms - climbing, rambling and standard - continue to delight. The Saturday evening Fireworks nights are extremely popular especially with younger visitors. There is also musical entertainment most evenings as well as the night illuminations. In September, the displays of tuberous begonias and dahlias reach their zenith. In the perennial borders towering shocks of red, gold and blues of lychnis, solidago and fall asters form a bulwark against the shortening days. Hanging baskets, hydrangeas and fuchsias prolong the summer's glory. The fall colours peak in October with flaming red and russet Japanese maples. Magnificent arbutus trees and copper beech add more colour to the autumnal scene. The dahlias continue the display assisted by varieties of chrysanthemums until the frost comes. It is once again time to plant the bulbs for spring. Above the bulbs in freshly-tilled beds, pansies and daisies - some in bloom - mark time in wait for spring. Replacing the autumn colours of November come sparkling and unique Christmas lights setting the evenings aglow from December 1 to January 6. Carollers and festive entertainment complement the atmosphere for a perfect family visit to The Butchart Gardens at Christmas Time.</p>
<p><b>The Gardens Through the Year</b></p>	<p>Through the years subtle changes alter the face of The Gardens. Each month there is something of beauty and interest, from the glorious relief of spring to the mass display of fall colour.</p> <p>In winter the bare bones of The Gardens show the shape of things to come, with the gentle variance of texture and colour of the broadleaved evergreens and conifers, the berried trees and shrubs. Hints of spring come from early pansies and English daisies, polyanthus and primroses. The bright red of holly berries and pink blooms of heather are a welcome contrast to the grey of a winter day.</p> <p>Against a backdrop of blossoming trees and shrubs - forsythia, jasmine, pieris and the early flowering Japanese cherries - early March lays a carpet of crocus, wallflowers and spring flowers. The last week of March is the height of the season for hyacinths and daffodils.</p> <p>In April the results of the fall planting of more than 250,000 bulbs reach their peak. First with the gold of narcissus and daffodils then with the riot of colour from beds of tulips - Spring dons her mantle. Flowering cherries and plums, crabapples and some 30 species of other flowering shrubs join the display. Rhododendrons and azaleas start to show and the native dogwood is starting to bloom.</p> <p>In May, the tulips begin to offer their place on the palette of colours to the rhododendrons, azaleas and the early perennials. Siberian wallflowers and forget-me-nots supply both scent and colour, and the unusual handkerchief tree - davidia involucrata - is at its peak. Cinerarias are being planted out with gloriously coloured blooms and schizanthus comes onto the scene in a multitude of hanging baskets.</p> <p>In June the azaleas and late rhododendrons are at their best. Columbine, delphiniums and - in more shaded places - the rare Himalayan blue poppy join with nemesia, tuberous begonias, stocks, poppies and sweet william to bring in summer. Weigela, deutzia and beauty bush are in full bloom. The Rose Garden bursts into tumultuous</p>

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	<p>colour during the last two weeks of the month and becomes the centre of attraction for visitors to The Butchart Gardens.</p> <p>During the month of July and into August, the changing beds of annuals, each supplying non-stop colour, welcome the perennials to the show. The roses in all their different forms - climbing, rambling and standard - continue to delight. The Saturday evening Fireworks nights are extremely popular especially with younger visitors. There is also musical entertainment most evenings as well as the night illuminations.</p> <p>In September, the displays of tuberous begonias and dahlias reach their zenith. In the perennial borders towering shocks of red, gold and blues of lychnis, solidago and fall asters form a bulwark against the shortening days. Hanging baskets, hydrangeas and fuchsias prolong the summer's glory.</p> <p>The fall colours peak in October with flaming red and russet Japanese maples. Magnificent arbutus trees and copper beech add more colour to the autumnal scene. The dahlias continue the display assisted by varieties of chrysanthemums until the frost comes.</p> <p>It is once again time to plant the bulbs for spring. Above the bulbs in freshly-tilled beds, pansies and daisies - some in bloom - mark time in wait for spring. Replacing the autumn colours of November come sparkling and unique Christmas lights setting the evenings aglow from December 1 to January 7. Carollers and festive entertainment complement the atmosphere for a perfect family visit to The Butchart Gardens at Christmas Time.</p>
<p><b>Xmas in the Gardens</b></p>	<p>The Gardens dress up for Christmas in glorious style. They are transformed by a remarkable display of thousands of twinkling lights and seasonal decorations. Miles of fresh evergreen swags and wreaths, holly and ivy and winter berries adorn the walkways and lamp posts. Traditional holiday music adds to the magic. The Twelve Days of Christmas displays are tucked into the landscape as a surprise for our visitors. Outdoor Entertainment lively performances featuring traditional carolling and music in the evenings from 5p.m. to 9p.m. in Water Wheel Square.</p>
<p><b>Dining</b></p>	<p>- <b>Fine dining in The Dining Room Restaurant</b> - Historic surroundings matched with contemporary, fresh local foods. Located in the original Butchart family residence, the restaurant offers spectacular views of the Private Garden, the Italian Garden and Tod Inlet. Meals are professionally prepared, colourfully presented, and elegantly served.</p> <p>Afternoon Tea is served year round. A traditional repast, made popular in England hundreds of years ago. This is a delectable selection fit for an afternoon indulgence or as a light lunch. Our Afternoon tea includes warm traditional delicacies, savoury tea sandwiches and housemade sweets.</p> <p>Lunch is served seasonally from April to October. The menu is renewed each season, with innovative dishes built around local Island-raised product. Some examples include our Backyard sampler, the West coast hand-peeled shrimp croissant, and the popular wild BC Salmon fillet.</p> <p>Dinner is served seasonally from June 15 – Sept 15, and again from Dec 1 – Jan 6. A favourite with locals and visitors alike, the menu offers a range of different items. Chef Travis Hansen and his team of professionals prepare each item with care. Island-raised rack of lamb, Cowichan Valley chicken, local trout... all are exquisitely prepared.</p>

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	<p>Wines are carefully selected from as close as their BC back yard, and as far away as Australia and Spain. A huge selection of award-winning BC wines is available, with an ample selection of wines by the glass. All wines selected lend themselves to our cuisine, and our friendly and knowledgeable wait staff are always ready to help you decide.</p> <p>- <b>The Blue Poppy Restaurant:</b> meals with a West Coast flair at The Blue Poppy Restaurant; convenient cafeteria-style in a flower-filled conservatory, this restaurant has a wide variety of fresh, delicious meals including divine desserts and coffees.</p> <p>- <b>The popular Coffee Shop:</b> lunches, lighter fare and specialty coffees and desserts are available in a casual setting. In the winter pull up a comfortable armchair in front of the fireplace and enjoy a cappuccino and home baked treat, or order a snack or light lunch to go while you tour The Gardens.</p>
<b>Shopping</b>	<p><b>The Seed &amp; Gift Store</b> presents an array of gift ideas for everyone. Their mail order seed catalogue began in 1920 when Jennie Butchart began packaging seed to satisfy myriad requests from visitors world wide. Still individually packaged by hand, their seed business today provides winter work for many dedicated staff. Open every day, you will find yourself greeted by knowledgeable, friendly staff among 800 sq. m. (8,600 sq. ft.) of gifts and souvenirs including an impressive range of products made by local artisans. Perhaps of special interest are items for the gardener, jewellery and clothing. In support of many talented artisans living in our area, the Garden Gallery is open spring through autumn. Featured is art for the garden displayed in a garden setting. Look for unique metal-art, statues and mosaics to enhance your garden.</p>

<b>ADDITIONAL INFO</b>	
<b>Are wheelchairs available?</b>	There is a limited number of wheelchairs available, free of charge (but requiring a \$10 refundable deposit), on a first-come, first-served basis
<b>Are weddings allowed?</b>	Weddings are not allowed in the gardens
<b>Are dogs allowed?</b>	Yes, on a short leash and under control at all times.
<b>Packages</b>	The Autumn Lunch package includes admission to The Gardens, plus a 2-course lunch (offering a choice of appetizer and main course, or main course and dessert) in the Dining Room Restaurant. Prices: October \$32; November \$27
<b>Accommodation properties offering packages including The Butchart Gardens.</b>	<p>Brentwood-Saanichton (5-7 minute drive):</p> <p>Brentwood Bay Lodge &amp; Spa, 849 Verdier Avenue, Brentwood Bay V8M 1C5 Gazebo Bed &amp; Breakfast, 5460 Old W. Saanich Rd., Victoria V9E 2A7</p> <p>From Downtown Victoria &amp; Surrounding Area (25 minute drive):</p> <p>Dashwood Manor B&amp;B, One Cook Street, Victoria V8V 3W6 The Fairmont Empress, 721 Government Street, Victoria V8W 1W5 Lord Nelson Bed &amp; Breakfast, 1034 Bewdley Ave, Victoria V9A 6T1 Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour, 728 Humbolt Street, Victoria V8W 3Z5</p>
<b>Chelsea Flower Show</b>	The Butchart Gardens became the first Canadian garden to exhibit at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show held from May 22 - 26, 2007 on the grounds of the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, England. During May the grounds of the Royal Hospital are transformed into the fabulous show gardens, inspirational small gardens and vibrant

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	<p>horticultural displays making up the world's most famous flower show. The show is considered the first event of the summer season and showcases the finest examples of horticultural excellence, created by the best garden designers and plantspeople. It sets the latest gardening trends, is the favourite place to launch new plants, and features the newest and most desirable gardening products.</p>
<b>Top 100 Event</b>	<p>The Butchart Gardens has been designated a Top 100 Event in North America for 2007 by the American Bus Association. In its 2007 edition, the annual guide to professional travel planners and the general public highlights the top fairs, festivals, parades, exhibits, theater and shows across the U.S. and Canada. ABA, the leading trade organization for the motorcoach and group travel industry, compiles the list, which is chosen from among hundreds of events nominated by state and provincial tourism officials, and convention and visitors associations from across North America. A panel of U.S. and Canadian travel professionals bases its selections on the events' broad appeal, their accessibility to large groups arriving by motorcoach, and a variety of other criteria.</p> <p>Robin Clarke, owner of The Butchart Gardens, said "We have worked with motorcoach tour operators for many years and we truly appreciate the work they do in bringing people to see The Gardens. We are delighted our 'Magic of Christmas' event, which requires months of preparation by hundreds of staff, has been given this honour".</p>
<b>New Website</b>	<p>The Butchart Gardens, a 103 year old business, launched a complete redesign of their popular website in July 2007. The well known attraction is recognized for its stunning visual displays and it has lavishly filled its website with photographs, interactive maps and animated flash presentations. "In the last year we have had website visitors from all Canadian provinces and U.S. states, plus another 170 countries ranging from Andorra to Zambia, so we do know the Internet is a marvelous way to instantly communicate with potential visitors worldwide," said Dave Cowen, general manager of The Butchart Gardens. Visit <a href="http://www.ButchartGardenes.com">www.ButchartGardenes.com</a> where you can sign up for the informative newsletter bringing you information on seasonal events and flowers, details of interesting plants, recipes from the Garden's restaurants and more.</p>
<b>Butchart Trivia</b>	<p>Each year over 1,000,000 bedding plants in some 700 varieties are used throughout the Gardens to ensure uninterrupted bloom from March through October!</p>
<b>Good Luck Tacca</b>	<p>There is a Butchart family tradition of acquiring objects when travelling. The Fountain of the Three Surgeons and the bronze casting of the wild boar are both from Florence, Italy. The fountain is a casting made from a much smaller fountain created by Professor Sirio Tofanari in 1958. Other works by him include the little donkey and the foal that stand close by the statue of the wild boar on the Piazza in front of the Butchart Residence. The boar is a rare bronze copy of a casting of the marble statue displayed in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. This bronze known affectionally as "Tacca," in honour of Pietro Tacca, the artist who created the statue in 1620. His snout is finely burnished by thousands of visitors who give it an affectionate rub for good luck. Tacca is dedicated to all the children and dogs who visit The Gardens.</p>

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<b>VICTORIA, BC</b>	<p>This intimate, sophisticated seaside City is the vacation capital of Canada and the premiere tourist spot in the Pacific Northwest. Victoria is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island and sparkles in one of Canada's mildest climates. This area is the sunniest spot in the province and the gentlest in the country in terms of climate, environment, and lifestyle. Victoria's unique character is deeply rooted in its 150-year history - a history full of colourful people and fascinating tales. The city's British colonial heritage is still very much in evidence, but contemporary Victoria has a distinctly Pacific northwest flavour. Today, Victoria is best known as the capital city of British Columbia, and as a world-renowned tourism destination. One of the most visitor-friendly cities anywhere, Victoria is also one of Canada's favourite places to call home. Greater Victoria and its outlying areas now have a population of 300,000, and the one-time colonial outpost is alive with cosmopolitan dining, superb shopping, a colourful nightlife and a full complement of cultural offerings.</p> <p>Aptly named the "City of Gardens", Victoria is world-renowned for its many beautiful gardens. Victoria's legendary passion for gardening stems from its early days when British settlers tamed their bit of unruly Pacific wilderness by planting roses to remind them of home. This love of gardening quickly turned into a tradition that flourishes all over Victoria, and the mildness of the climate means there is always something blooming.</p>
<b>Location</b>	Victoria, beautifully sited on its own Inner Harbour, is one of the most charming small cities you'll ever find. Since it's on an island, accessible only by ferry (the best way to go) or floatplane, a more leisurely sense of time prevails in Victoria. It's a perfect antidote for stressed-out mainlanders.
<b>Geography</b>	<p>"To realize Victoria, you must take all that the eye admires most in Bournemouth, Torquay, the Isle of Wight, the Happy Valley at Hong Kong, the Doon, Sorrento and Camps Bay; add reminisces of the Thousand Islands, and arrange the whole round the Bay of Naples, with some Himalayas in the background."</p> <p>- Rudyard Kipling, after visiting the city around 1908</p>
<b>Name</b>	The City began in 1843 as a Hudson Bay Company trading post and was named in honour of Queen Victoria.
<b>Population</b>	The City of Victoria's population is 79,013 (2001). Greater Victoria is composed of four municipalities: Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and Saanich, and the Capital Region population is 344,567 (2001). The population of Vancouver Island is 699,645 (2000).
<b>Parliament Buildings</b>	Designed by 25-year-old Francis Rattenbury and built between 1893 and 1898 at a cost of nearly C\$1 million, the Parliament Buildings (also called the Legislature) are an architectural gem. The 40-minute tour comes across at times like an eighth-grade civics lesson, but it's worth it to see the fine mosaics, marble, woodwork, and stained glass.
<b>Time zone</b>	Pacific Standard Time, 3 hours behind EST
<b>Health</b>	Don't forget out-of-province travel insurance.
<b>Safety tips</b>	Victoria is a very safe city, just normal precautions required.

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	Located in sub-Mediterranean zone, Victorians enjoy some of the most moderate weather in all of Canada. Victoria boasts an average of 2,183 hours of sunshine yearly, and an eight month frost free season. Average annual rainfall is 23 inches (compared to over 50 inches in New York).
<b>Today's weather</b>	20 degrees Centigrade and sunny (8 September 2007)
<b>Best time to visit</b>	Victoria enjoys moderately warm, sunny summers and mild, rainy winters. There are

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	<p>16 hours of daylight in mid-June. Only 10% of the annual rainfall occurs during the summer months. Victoria gets half as much rain as Vancouver, thanks to the sheltering Olympic Peninsula to the south and its own southeasterly position on huge Vancouver Island. The average annual rainfall in Vancouver is 47 inches; in Victoria, it's just 23 inches.</p>
<b>GETTING THERE</b>	<p>Victoria and Vancouver Island are extremely accessible. Each day, more than 50 flights land at Victoria's International Airport from Vancouver and Seattle airports, in addition to numerous direct flights from many major Canadian cities. Harbour-to-harbour flights from Seattle and Vancouver, by float plane or helicopter and an efficient ferry system (1hr35min) between Victoria and the mainland make Victoria easier to get to than ever before.</p>
<b>Flying time</b>	<p>Toronto to Victoria: 5 hours</p>
<b>Victoria Orientation</b>	<p>Victoria was born at the edge of the Inner Harbour in the 1840s and spread outward from there. The areas of most interest to visitors, including downtown and Old Town, lie along the eastern edge of the Inner Harbour. (North of the Johnson St. Bridge is the Upper Harbour, which is largely industrial but taking on new life as old buildings are redeveloped.) A little farther east, the Ross Bay and Oak Bay residential areas around Dallas Road and Beach Drive reach the beaches along the open waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.</p> <p>Victoria's central landmark is The Fairmont Empress hotel on Government Street, right across from the Inner Harbour wharf. If you turn your back to the hotel, downtown and Old Town are on your right, while the provincial Legislative Buildings and the Royal B.C. Museum are on your immediate left. Next to them is the dock for the Seattle-Port Angeles ferries and beyond that the residential community of James Bay, the first neighborhood in the city to be developed.</p> <p>Main Arteries &amp; Streets - Three main north-south arteries intersect just about every destination you may want to reach in Victoria. Government Street goes through Victoria's main downtown shopping-and-dining district. Wharf Street, edging the harbor, merges with Government Street at The Fairmont Empress hotel. Douglas Street, running parallel to Government Street, is the main business thoroughfare as well as the road to Nanaimo and the rest of the island. It's also Trans-Canada Highway 1. The "Mile 0" marker sits at the corner of Douglas and Dallas Road. Also running parallel to Government and Douglas streets is Blanshard Street (Hwy. 17), the route to the Saanich Peninsula, including the Sidney-Vancouver ferry terminal, and Butchart Gardens.</p> <p>Important east-west streets include the following: Johnson Street lies at the northern end of downtown and the Old Town, where the small E&amp;N Station sits opposite Swans Hotel at the corner of Wharf Street. The Johnson Street Bridge is the demarcation line between the Upper Harbour and the Inner Harbour. Belleville Street is the Inner Harbour's southern edge. The Legislative Buildings and the ferry terminal are here. Belleville Street loops around westward toward Victoria Harbour before heading south, becoming Dallas Road. Dallas Road follows the water's edge past residential areas and beaches before it winds northward up to Oak Bay.</p>
<b>Distances</b>	<p>Vancouver Island is 460km long!</p>
<b>Ferries</b>	<p>Touring by Miniferry: Catch a Victoria Harbour Ferry and take a 45-minute tour around the harbor past the floating neighborhood of West Bay or up the gorge, where tidal waterfalls reverse direction with the changing tide. Moonlight tours depart every evening at sunset.</p> <p>Crossing the Inner, Upper, and Victoria harbours by one of the blue 12-passenger</p>

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	<p>Victoria Harbour Ferries (tel. 250/708-0201; <a href="http://www.victoriaharbourferry.com">www.victoriaharbourferry.com</a>) is cheap and fun. These boats have big windows all the way around and look like they're straight out of a cartoon. Fortunately, the harbor is smooth sailing. May through September, the ferries to The Fairmont Empress hotel, Coast Harbourside Hotel, and Ocean Pointe Resort hotel run about every 15 minutes daily from 9am to 9pm. In March, April, and October, ferry service runs daily 11am to 5pm. November through February, the ferries run only on sunny weekends 11am to 5pm. The cost per hop is C\$3.50 for adults and C\$1.50 for children.</p> <p>Instead of just taking the ferry for a short hop across, try the 45-minute Harbour tour for C\$14 adults, C\$12 seniors, and C\$7 children under 12, or the 55-minute Gorge tour for C\$16 adults, C\$14 seniors, and C\$8 children under 12.</p> <p>The Ferry Ballet: Starting at 10:45am every Sunday during summer, the ferries gather in front of The Fairmont Empress to perform a ferry "ballet" - it looks much like the hippo dance in Disney's Fantasia.</p>
<b>Car Rental</b>	<p>Car-rental agencies in Victoria include the following: Avis, 1001 Douglas St. (tel. 800/879-2847 or 250/386-8468; <a href="http://www.avis.com">www.avis.com</a>; bus no. 5 to Broughton St.); Budget, 757 Douglas St. (tel. 800/668-9833 or 250/953-5300; <a href="http://www.budgetvictoria.com">www.budgetvictoria.com</a>); Hertz, 655 Douglas St., in the Queen Victoria Inn (tel. 800/654-3131 or 250/360-2822; <a href="http://www.hertz.com">www.hertz.com</a>); and National, 767 Douglas St. (tel. 800/227-7368 or 250/386-1213; <a href="http://www.nationalvictoria.com">www.nationalvictoria.com</a>).</p>
<b>Buses</b>	<p>The Victoria Regional Transit System (B.C. Transit) (250/382-6161; <a href="http://www.bctransit.com">www.bctransit.com</a>) operates 40 bus routes through greater Victoria as well as the nearby towns of Sooke and Sidney. Buses run to both the Butchart Gardens and the Vancouver Ferry Terminal at Sidney. Regular service on the main routes runs daily from 6am to just past midnight. Schedules and route maps are available at the Tourism Victoria Visitor Info Centre, where you can pick up a copy of the Victoria Rider's Guide</p>
<b>Passes</b>	<p>If you are planning to visit several Gulf Islands, consider purchasing a 4- or 7-day SailPass (<a href="http://www.bcferries.com/sailpass">www.bcferries.com/sailpass</a>) from BC Ferries, which can reduce both fares and confusion. The SailPass is a one-price ticket that allows you to travel along 20 ferry routes in southern B.C., including those routes servicing the Gulf Islands (except for travel along the Inside Passage routes or to the Queen Charlottes).</p>

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	<p>Visitors relax in true British style with afternoon tea, offered in dozens of tearooms throughout the city. One of the best known locations is the Tea Lobby in The Fairmont Empress Hotel. Built in 1908 on Victoria's Inner Harbour, The Fairmont Empress has been restored to her original majesty and is one of western Canada's most popular landmarks.</p> <p>But there is a wide variety of accommodations available in the Victoria area from B&amp;B's to Spa Resorts.</p>
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<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	<p>For the visitor who is young, or young at heart, Victoria and Vancouver Island have plenty of fun things to see and do. From attractions and museums to zoos and recreation, there is something for kids of all ages. By nature, Victoria and Vancouver Island have miles and miles of things for families to do. Ocean waters, long sandy beaches, rainforests and wide open spaces wait to be explored. Children are encouraged to get up close and personal with local marine life, bugs, butterflies and farm animals at Victoria's unique gardens and zoos. Museums abound on the Island and have hands-on displays and activities for their favourite little customers. Recreation centres, swimming pools, waterslides and mini-golf are always popular with the whole family and many of Victoria and Vancouver Islands festivals cater to</p>

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	<p>children.</p> <p>Miniature World - inside the Fairmont Empress hotel (the entrance is around the corner) - is very cool. You walk in and you're plunged into darkness, except for a moon, some planets, and a tiny spaceship flying up to rendezvous with an orbiting mother ship. This is the most up-to-date display. Farther in are re-creations of battle scenes, fancy 18th-century dress balls, a miniature Canadian Pacific railway running all the way across a miniature Canada, a three-ring circus and midway, and scenes from Mother Goose and Charles Dickens stories. Better yet, most of these displays do something: The train moves at the punch of a button and the circus rides whirl around and light up as simulated darkness falls.</p> <p>On truly hot days, head for the waterslides at the All Fun Recreation Park, 2207 Millstream Rd. (tel. 250/474-3184; <a href="http://www.allfun.bc.ca">www.allfun.bc.ca</a>). From mid-June to Labour Day it's open daily 11am to 7pm. The cost is C\$20 for sliders 11 years and older and C\$15 for those 4 to 10 years old; it's free for children under 4.</p>
<b>Teens</b>	<p>BC Aviation Museum: A must for plane buffs, or for anyone with an interest in the history of flight. Located adjacent to Victoria International Airport, this small hangar is crammed to bursting with a score of original, rebuilt, and replica airplanes. The collection ranges from the first Canadian-designed craft ever to fly (a bizarre kitelike contraption) to World War I-vintage Nieuports and Tiger Moths, to floatplanes and Spitfires and slightly more modern water bombers and helicopters. Thursdays you can watch the all-volunteer crew in the restoration hangar working to bring these old craft back to life.</p>
<b>Romance</b>	<p>Consider the alluring Gulf Islands, a collection of several dozen mountainous islands that sprawl across the Strait of Georgia between the British Columbia mainland and Vancouver Island. While only a handful of the islands are served by regularly scheduled ferries, this entire area is popular with boaters, cyclists, kayakers, and sailboat enthusiasts. Lying in the rain shadow of Washington State's Olympic Mountains, the Gulf Islands have the most temperate climate in all of Canada, without the heavy rainfall that characterizes much of coastal British Columbia. In fact, the climate here is officially listed as semi-Mediterranean!</p> <p>The Gulf Islands remain a charming destination. The islands are still underdeveloped, and some of the best restaurants and lodgings are tucked away in forests down long roads. There's little in the way of organized activities: no water slides, theme parks, and few major resorts; just incredible scenery, great biking and kayaking, lovely inns, and fine dining.</p>
<b>Seniors</b>	<p>Victoria is well known as a retiree destination, so the facilities and attractions of the area are particularly suitable for Seniors.</p>

<b>UNIQUES</b>	<p>Victoria is the only city in the world where you can zoom out on a boat in the morning to see a pod of killer whales, and make it back in time for an expansive afternoon tea.</p> <p>Cadborosaurus: Sightings of Cadborosaurus or "Caddy", the legendary Vancouver Island sea monster, have been recorded for over a century and also form part of aboriginal oral history. The most recent credible sighting occurred in 1933 when Clerk to the Legislature, Major W.H. Langley, spotted Caddy in the waters around Victoria. Following his sighting, the Victoria Times held a contest to name the monster. Its name was derived from the location of the majority of sightings: Cadboro Bay. Three or four sightings take place each year and are reported in the local newspapers. International attention has been focused on Caddy by an episode of the syndicated television program, In Search Of... Sometimes described as a sister to the Loch Ness Monster, Cadborosaurus reportedly has a long, greenish brown, looped body with a</p>
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	horse- or camel-like head mounted on a long slender neck with two or three coils. The tail is rarely seen. Sightings tend to occur in calm waters at dusk or in the early morning.
<b>Surprising</b>	Recently named "Top City in the Americas" by Conde Nast Traveler Magazine's 2003 Readers' Choice Awards, Victoria has long been known for its British heritage, but there is another side to the city's "tweed curtain." Victoria's flip-side is a cosmopolitan island destination that boasts world-class accommodation, spas, shopping and food and wine. The pulse of a city can be felt through its arts and entertainment and as British Columbia's capital city, Victoria is alive with culture. Victoria also boasts the mildest climate in the country. As a result, outdoor adventure and gardens abound year-round. With a clean environment and charming ambience, it is no surprise that Victoria is one of the world's favourite destinations.
<b>History</b>	<p>1790 — On June 30, the native people of Albert Head (now part of Sooke) discovered Spanish explorer Manuel Quimper on their beach, claiming the land in the name of the King of Spain.</p> <p>1842 — The Hudson Bay Company's Chief Factor, James Douglas, made a detailed examination of Sooke, Beecher Bay, Metchosin, Esquimalt and Victoria Harbours and selected Victoria (an area then known as Camosack ) as the site for the Company's new depot.</p> <p>1843 — On March 14, Douglas arrived off Clover Point and, the next day, decided to build a fort at the Inner Harbour. On Sunday, March 19, Father Jean Baptiste Bolduc, the Catholic priest who accompanied Douglas, celebrated the first mass in the area. The fort's construction began on June 4. It was called Fort Camosack and then Fort Albert before it was changed, on June 10, to Fort Victoria.</p> <p>1846 — On June 15, the Oregon Treaty set the boundary with the United States as the 49th parallel to the Georgia Strait, then deflecting south, through the centre of the Strait, to the ocean. The sawmill was constructed at Mill Stream, north of Fort Victoria.</p> <p>1849 — On January 13, the British government granted Vancouver Island to the Hudson's Bay Company, with the stipulation that it must establish settlements of colonists on the island within five years. The Imperial Government of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island was created. Fort Victoria was the capital and James Douglas took command.</p> <p>1850 — On March 11, Richard Blanshard became the Island's first governor.</p> <p>1852 — A townsite was laid out in streets around Fort Victoria and the name was changed to Victoria.</p> <p>1858 — The Gold Rush turned Victoria into an important community through which 25,000 miners and their supplies were funneled to the gold camps. The BC mainland became a Crown colony. Victoria's daily newspaper, The British Colonist, was born</p> <p>1862 — Victoria was incorporated as a city, with Thomas Harris as its first Mayor.</p>
<b>Books</b>	Frommer's Vancouver and Victoria The Butchart Gardens – A Family Legacy
<b>1000 Places to see before you die</b>	Royal British Columbia Museum

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<b>Must Sees</b>	The Butchart Gardens (see above)
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<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Golf</b>	<p>Golfing Victoria's golf courses and Vancouver Island's golf courses is a golfer's paradise. With a climate that encourages golfing year-round, Victoria and Vancouver Island are home to many of Canada's most beautiful and challenging courses. Imagine playing on rolling coastlines framed by stately evergreen trees and accompanied by an ocean view. Golf your way up and down Vancouver Island and discover the variety of courses waiting to exhilarate you and improve your game.</p> <p>Victoria is one of the premier golf destinations in Canada and with the mildest climate in the country residents and visitors can golf year-round. Golfers can choose from 15 primary courses in the Victoria area from full-scale championship links to smaller and less difficult courses, most with spectacular lake, ocean and mountain views. The truly dedicated golfer can spend an entire vacation exploring the variety of courses and literally golf there way up and down Vancouver Island. Bear Mountain Resort and Golf Community; the first Nicklaus-designed golf course on Vancouver Island opened in 2003. The completed resort opened in 2005 with two championship 18-hole golf courses, residential properties, a resort hotel, shopping village and a 44,000 sq. ft. clubhouse.</p>
<b>Fishing</b>	<p>Saltwater fishing's the thing out here, and unless you know the area, it's probably best to take a guide. Adam's Fishing Charters (tel. 250/370-2326; <a href="http://www.adamsfishingcharters.com">www.adamsfishingcharters.com</a>) and the Marine Adventure Centre, 950 Wharf St. (tel. 250/995-2211; <a href="http://www.marine-adventures.com">www.marine-adventures.com</a>), are good places to start. Both are on the Inner Harbour down below the Visitor Info Centre. Chartering a boat and guide starts around C\$90 per hour per boat, with a minimum of 3 or 4 hours.</p> <p>To fish, you need a nonresident saltwater fishing license. Licenses for saltwater fishing (including the salmon surcharge) cost C\$14 for 1 day for nonresidents and C\$12 for B.C. residents. Tackle shops sell licenses, have details on current restrictions, and often carry copies of the B.C. Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide</p>
<b>Horse riding</b>	<p>On the Mainland, Horse Trekking the Chilcotin Plateau: the high plateau country of the B.C. interior has some of the most impressive scenery around. Soaring peaks rise above deep valleys, with mountain meadows alive with flowers that bloom for just a few weeks in high summer.</p>
<b>Hiking</b>	<p>Strolling Victoria's Inner Harbour: watch the boats and aquatic wildlife come and go while walking along a paved pathway that winds past manicured flower gardens. The best stretch runs south from the Inner Harbour near the Government Buildings, past Undersea World, the Royal London Wax Museum, and the Seattle ferry dock.</p>
<b>Cycling</b>	<p>According to the Government of Canada (Statistics Canada 2001), Victoria is rated the fittest city in Canada. Thirty-six percent of the adult population is active which is nearly double the national average. With the mildest climate in the country, Victoria is Canada's destination for year-round outdoor adventure. Vancouver Island's natural beauty also inspires people to get out and enjoy their surroundings. Victoria provides easy access to miles of scenic trails and sites that incorporate old growth rainforests, ocean shores and mountains. Biking the Dallas Road to Willows Bay: where else can you find a bike path by an ocean with high mountain peaks for a backdrop?</p> <p>The Cycling Capital of Canada</p> <p>Victoria is the "Cycling Capital of Canada" according to the Government of Canada. In the Greater Victoria Region, cycling accounts for 6.2% of commuter travel – more than any other city in Canada. Ottawa comes in at 2.1%; Vancouver at 1.7% and Toronto at 0.75%. In Victoria, most people live within a 30-minute bike ride of their workplace and from some neighbourhoods, up to 20% of trips to work are made by bicycle. Bike lanes on many of Victoria's downtown streets and bike racks on city</p>

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	buses that travel to the suburban communities also promote cycling. More people also wear bike helmets in Victoria than anywhere else in the world (92%).
<b>Diving</b>	The Saanich Inlet, about a 20-minute drive north of Victoria, is a pristine fjord considered one of the top diving areas in the world. Classes and underwater scuba adventures can be arranged through Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa, Canada's only luxury PADI dive resort.

<b>CULTURE</b>	
<b>Arts</b>	<p>The only Shinto shrine in North America is on display at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, along with a large Asian art collection. One of Canada's finest art museums, the gallery also contains European, African, American, Central American, Peruvian, Canadian, Inuit and ancient Egyptian and Greek art.</p> <p>Emily Carr: Victoria was the birthplace of one of British Columbia's most distinguished early residents, the painter and writer Emily Carr (1871-1945). Though trained in the classical European tradition, Carr developed her own style in response to the powerful landscapes of the Canadian west coast. Eschewing both marriage and stability, she spent her life traveling the coast, capturing the landscapes and Native peoples in vivid and striking works. In addition to visiting the great collection of Carr's paintings at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, you can visit the Emily Carr House, 207 Government St. (tel. 250/383-5843; <a href="http://www.emilycarr.com">www.emilycarr.com</a>), where she was born. The house has been restored to the condition it would have been in when Carr lived there. In addition, many of the rooms have been hung with reproductions of her art or quotations from her writings.</p>
<b>Music</b>	<p>The well-respected Victoria Symphony Orchestra, 846 Broughton St. (tel. 250/385-9771; <a href="http://www.victoriasymphony.bc.ca">www.victoriasymphony.bc.ca</a>), kicks off its season on the first Sunday of August with Symphony Splash, a free concert performed on a barge in the Inner Harbour. Regular performances begin in September and last through May. The Symphony Orchestra performs at the Royal Theatre or the University Farquhar Auditorium.</p> <p>The Pacific Opera Victoria, 1316B Government St. (tel. 250/385-0222; box office 250/386-6121; <a href="http://www.pov.bc.ca">www.pov.bc.ca</a>), presents three productions annually during the October-to-April season. Performances are normally at the McPherson Playhouse and Royal Theatre. The repertoire covers the classical bases, from Mozart and Rossini to Verdi and even Wagner.</p>
<b>Theatre</b>	The Royal Theatre, 805 Broughton St., and the McPherson Playhouse, 3 Centennial Sq., share a common box office (tel. 888/717-6121 or 250/386-6121; <a href="http://www.rmts.bc.ca">www.rmts.bc.ca</a> ). The Royal - built in the early 1900s and renovated in the 1970s - hosts concerts by the Victoria Symphony and performances by the Pacific Opera Victoria, as well as touring dance and theater companies. The McPherson - built in 1914 as the first Pantages Vaudeville Theatre - is home to smaller stage plays and performances by the Victoria Operatic Society. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30am to 5:30pm and on performance days for 2 hours before showtime.
<b>Museums</b>	<p>The Maritime Museum, originally the Provincial Court House, is a highlight of Bastion Square and depicts the story of BC's maritime history from early explorers to the present.</p> <p>The Royal British Columbia Museum chronicles the province's social and natural history. In Thunderbird Park, beside the museum, ancient Native totem poles stand tall. You can also watch traditional poles being carved in the carving house. The grounds around the museum are planted with vegetation native to all regions of BC.</p>

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	<p>The 144 masterworks on display have been carefully selected by the British Museum for rarity, beauty, and historical significance. They span more than 3,000 years beginning during the time of the great pyramids through the era of Cleopatra and ending with the Roman occupation of the fourth century A.D. Highlights include a splendid gilded mummy mask, gold jewelry, seven sections from papyrus rolls containing the Book of the Dead, a colossal quartzite sculpture of the head of Amenhotep III, a haunting Greco-Roman period mummy portrait and a marvelously sculpted 2,300-kilogram (5,000-pound) red granite lion.</p> <p>Carr House: The birthplace and childhood home of Emily Carr, one of Canada's most famous artists and authors, is located in historic James Bay. Built in 1863, Carr House is just minutes away from the Inner Harbour. It is restored to accurately depict the Victorian household and lifestyle of the Carr family. Emily's childhood home features a people's Gallery which alternately features works of art by local artists and original works by Emily Carr.</p> <p>Bug Zoo: Welcome to the amazing world of insects and spiders. A visit to this must see zoo offers visitors an excellent opportunity to view and experience multi-legged creatures from around the world in a safe, fun and friendly atmosphere. Get up close and personal with LIVE giant walkingsticks, alien-eyed praying mantids, hairy tarantulas and glow-in-the-dark scorpions, to name a few. Discover over 40 fascinating species including Canada's largest ant farm. The knowledgeable "bug guides" will reveal the exotic secrets of this hidden kingdom and provide a safe animal handling experience for the more adventurous. Imagine holding a tickling 400 leg millipede that stretches the length of your forearm! Bring your camera. It's an unforgettable, hands-on adventure.</p>
<b>Festivals</b>	<p>The Victoria Fringe Festival livens up the town in Aug/Sept annually with its consignment of non-stop comedy, drama, street theatre and dance in many indoor and outdoor venues.</p> <p>Independent theatre companies visit from around the world, so audiences can look forward to a truly international array of performances.</p>

<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	
<b>Beaches</b>	<p>The most popular beach is Oak Bay's Willows Beach, at Beach and Dalhousie roads along the esplanade. The park, playground, and snack bar make it a great place to spend the day building a sand castle. Gyro Beach Park, Beach Road on Cadboro Bay, is another good spot for winding down. At the Ross Bay Beaches, below Beacon Hill Park, you can stroll or bike along the promenade at the water's edge.</p> <p>For a taste of the wild and rocky west coast, hike the oceanside trails in beautiful East Sooke Regional Park. Take Hwy. 14 west, turn south on Gillespie Road, and then take East Sooke Road.</p>
<b>Wildlife</b>	<p><b>Whale watching</b> in Victoria &amp; Vancouver Island is awesome! No other spectacle of nature compares to the awe-inspiring sight of a massive killer whale breaching out of the deep blue water only 100 metres from your boat. Victoria and Vancouver Island are well known as the place to view migrating and resident whales in their natural surroundings, as well as providing a number of other wildlife-watching opportunities throughout the seasons. For a holiday memory that will never be forgotten, experience the mystical beauty of the wild inhabitants of Victoria's waters and its surrounding area.</p> <p>Whale watching tours can be taken out of Victoria as well as from several other communities on the Island. Tour operators strictly follow the regulations for viewing marine life, as outlined by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and work very</p>

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	hard to monitor their activities. The best time to see migrating gray whales is during March and April; gray whales are sighted in Clayoquot and Barkley sound from February through October. The "resident" orca (killer) whales that live in the local waters are best viewed from May through November, when they are at their feeding grounds. During these months, orcas are reliably found in their feeding grounds and the weather is more conducive to sightings.
<b>Parks</b>	Discover the <b>Pacific Rim National Park</b> : The 4.5 hour drive to this rugged maritime park on Vancouver Island's west coast is stunning, and once there, you're in a world of old-growth temperate rainforests and surf-pounded beaches. It's a place where you can experience the primal glories of nature amid the pampering luxuries of a first-class resort.
<b>Gardens</b>	<b>Victoria Butterfly Gardens</b> : Stroll amidst hundreds of exotic butterflies flying free in a 12,000 square-foot indoor tropical rainforest. Witness the entire life cycle of these amazing insects. Spectacular flowering plants and foliage, fascinating birds, waterfalls and a stream with fish all contribute to make this a truly memorable experience. Featuring friendly helpful staff, lots of free parking and a well stocked gift shop. Located less than five minutes from Butchart Gardens.
<b>Castles/Forts</b>	Several splendid 19th century buildings are open to the public, including the 39-room <b>Craigdarroch Castle</b> , built in 1887 by Robert Dunsmuir, a BC coal baron. When touring the lavish residence with its seven chimneys, marble-tiled floors, pink granite columns and brilliant stained glass windows, make sure you wear your walking shoes... the tour could include the 87-step staircase to the fifth floor tower! A strong British influence has remained since the construction of Fort Victoria in 1843 by the Hudson's Bay Company, a dominant fur-trading company at the time, and Victoria remains friendly and clean, with restored historic buildings and miles of green lawns and parks. Fort Victoria was established on a site now known as Bastion Square. The buildings that exist today are restored, late 19th century warehouses, saloons and dining establishments which now house restaurants, shops and art galleries.

<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Shopping</b>	Victoria has dozens of little specialty shops that appeal to every taste and whim, and because the city is built on such a pedestrian scale, you can easily wander from place to place seeking out whatever treasure you're after. Nearly all of the areas listed below are within a short walk of The Fairmont Empress
<b>Antiques</b>	Victoria has long had a deserved reputation for antiques - particularly those of British origin. Many of the best stores are in Antique Row, a 3-block stretch on Fort Street between Blanshard and Cook streets. In addition to those listed below, check out Jeffries and Co. Silversmiths, 1026 Fort St. (tel. 250/383-8315); Romanoff & Company Antiques, 837 Fort St. (tel. 250/480-1543); and for furniture fans, Charles Baird Antiques, 1044A Fort St. (tel. 250/384-8809).
<b>Nightlife</b>	Whatever you decide to do with your Victoria evenings, chances are that your destination will be close at hand: One of the great virtues of Victoria's size is that nearly all of its attractions - concert halls, pubs, dance clubs, and theaters - are no more than a 10-minute walk from the Fairmont Empress hotel, right in the heart of the city, and easily reached by taking bus no. 5 to the Empress Hotel. Try Steamers, 570 Yates Street: one of the best places to catch live music on the cheap, Steamers features live music 7 nights a week. Once a grubby strip bar, this long, narrow downtown spot got a totally new interior and was reborn as the city's premium blues bar. "Blues" here isn't taken too literally, of course. Acts often stray into the far-off musical realms of zydeco, Celtic, and world beat. On Mondays, there's an open-stage acoustic jam (no cover).

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<b>Casinos</b>	At the Great Canadian Casino, 1708 Old Island Hwy. (tel. 250/391-0311; <a href="http://www.gcgaming.com">www.gcgaming.com</a> ), there are no floorshows, no alcohol, no dancing girls in glittering bikinis - just a casual and slightly genteel casino. Games include blackjack, roulette, sic bo, red dog (diamond dog), and Caribbean stud poker. It's open daily noon to 3am. Contact the casino for complimentary shuttle service from downtown Victoria.
<b>CUISINE</b>	Culinary Tourism In Victoria and the Islands, culinary tourism has taken root. Fill your visit with unique culinary experiences: meet the chef who prepares their meal, the farmer who grew or raised the produce used, and learn how regional cuisine and beverage production is making its mark on the food scene.
<b>Food</b>	<p>BC is responsible for some of the freshest produce in the world. Around Victoria, the northern Saanich Peninsula and the Cowichan Valley are home to agricultural land. The Island's coastal climate is mild and promotes a long growing season compared to the rest of Canada. The Cowichan Valley, 45 minutes north of Victoria, means "warm land" in a native tongue and enjoys the warmest and longest growing season on Vancouver Island. Visitors can tour both of these regions on a self-guided drive or can join a guided gourmet tour.</p> <p>Visit acclaimed wineries, cideries and a meadery, sample the region's organic produce, artisan cheeses and locally-produced gourmet fare. Do so on your own or join a tour for a behind-the-scenes experience.</p> <p>Buy fresh from the farm or from roadside stands, scattered along country roads, which operate on the honour system. Fresh greens and herbs, fruit and berries, cheese, poultry, lamb, ostrich and fallow deer are just a few of the products to be found. Stay overnight at a bed and breakfast on a working farm or go hiking with llamas. A culinary experience on Vancouver Island is unique and not soon forgotten.</p>
<b>Drink</b>	<p>The Ale Trail: Victoria has several microbreweries – many of which produce less than 15,000 barrels annually. Microbrewed beers are considered to be local, more authentic and more unusual. Victoria's brews are definitely local, with most breweries within walking distance from Victoria's historical, vibrant downtown core and Inner Harbour. Follow the "Ale Trail" and visit one or all breweries. Meet the brewmasters and sample their unique and award-winning craft.</p> <p>The Cowican Wineries: The Cowichan Valley is a gorgeous agricultural area a couple hours' drive from Victoria. Area wineries and the seaside town of Cowichan Bay are worth a stop. The vintners of the Cowichan Valley have gained a solid reputation for producing fine wines. Several of the wineries have opened their doors and offer 1-hour tours that are a great introduction for novices. They usually include a tasting of the vintner's art as well as a chance to purchase bottles or cases of your favorites.</p> <p>Cherry Point Vineyards, 840 Cherry Point Rd., Cowichan (tel. 250/743-1272; <a href="http://www.cherrypointvineyards.com">www.cherrypointvineyards.com</a>), looks like a slice of California's Napa Valley. The wine-tasting room and gift shop is open daily 10am to 5pm. Blue Grouse Vineyards, 4365 Blue Grouse Rd., Mill Bay (tel. 250/743-3834; <a href="http://www.bluegrousevineyards.com">www.bluegrousevineyards.com</a>), is a smaller winery that began as a hobby. April through September, it's open for tastings and on-site purchases Wednesday through Sunday 11am to 5pm (Wed-Sat the rest of the year). Merridale Cidery, located just south of Cowichan Bay at 1230 Merridale Rd. (tel. 800/998-9908 in B.C. only or 250/743-4293; <a href="http://www.merridalecider.com">www.merridalecider.com</a>), is worth a stop to taste their ciders. Open daily 10:30am to 5:30pm</p>
<b>Restaurants</b>	Victoria boasts the second highest number of restaurants per capita in North America (San Francisco is #1)

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	<p>Best Spot for a Romantic Dinner: Camille's, 45 Bastion Sq. (tel. 250/381-3433), offers a quiet, intimate, candlelit room and a wine list with a bottle or glass for every occasion.</p> <p>Best Chinese Cuisine: A billion and a half people can't be wrong. Actually, all of China has yet to eat at J&amp;J Wonton Noodle House, 1012 Fort St. (tel. 250/383-0680), but if they had, they'd love it.</p> <p>Best French Cuisine: At The Aerie, 600 Ebedora Lane, Malahat (tel. 800/518-1933 or 250/743-7115), chef Christophe Letard's cooking is as unmistakably French as his accent. It's also quite wonderful.</p> <p>Best Italian Cuisine: Il Terrazzo Ristorante, 555 Johnson St., off Waddington Alley (tel. 250/361-0028) features excellent northern-Italian cooking and extra points for the lovely patio.</p> <p>Best Pacific Northwest: The quality, freshness, inventiveness, and incredible attention to detail make the Sooke Harbour House, 1528 Whiffen Spit Rd., Sooke (tel. 800/889-9688 or 250/642-3421), the best in Victoria and the whole of Vancouver Island. It also wins for best seafood and best wine list.</p> <p>Best Newcomer: Arbutus Grille and Winebar, 849 Verdier Ave. (tel. 888/544-2079 or 250/544-5100), located 20 minutes north of Victoria in stunning Brentwood Bay Lodge and Spa, features a fresh Pacific Northwest menu full of daily surprises and wonderful tastes.</p> <p>Best Brewpub Restaurant: Canoe, 450 Swift St. (tel. 250/361-1940), is casual but upscale, has great beer, good food, and the option of dining indoors or out.</p> <p>Best Fish and Chips: Barb's Place, 310 Erie St. (tel. 250/384-6515), on Fisherman's Wharf, sells 'em freshly fried and extra delicious.</p> <p>Best for Kids: rebar, 50 Bastion Sq. (tel. 250/361-9223), offers large portions, terrific quality, and a funky laid-back atmosphere.</p> <p>Best Local Crowd: Pagliacci's, 1011 Broad St. (tel. 250/386-1662), noisy and crowded, is the place to be seen while you devour a plate of spaghetti Bolognese or a piping-hot sausage and mushroom pizza.</p> <p>Best Burgers &amp; Beer: Six Mile Pub, 494 Island Hwy., View Royal (tel. 250/478-3121), offers 10 house brews, juicy burgers (even veggie burgers), and loads of British pub-style atmosphere.</p> <p>Best Afternoon or High Tea: If you're doing the high tea thing only once, you may as well do it right and reserve a place at The Fairmont Empress, 721 Government St. (tel. 250/384-8111), Victoria's crown jewel of a hotel.</p>
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<b>MORE INFO</b>	1-888-824-6699 for Butchart Gardens
<b>Brochures</b>	
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.butchartgardens.com/cfrb">www.butchartgardens.com/cfrb</a> <a href="http://www.graylinewest.com">www.graylinewest.com</a> <a href="http://www.tourismvictoria.com">www.tourismvictoria.com</a>

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	<a href="http://www.MarriottVictoria.com">www.MarriottVictoria.com</a> <a href="http://www.harbour-air.com">www.harbour-air.com</a>
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<b>HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER</b>	Marriott Victoria Inner Harbour Hotel 728 Humboldt Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 3Z5 Tel: 250-480-3800 Fax: 250-480-3838 Reservations: 1-866-306-5451
<b>Location</b>	The award winning full service, four-Diamond Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour Hotel overlooks Victoria's historic and charming downtown, located just steps from world class attractions, venues and dining. This newly constructed Victoria hotel holds several Marriott awards for guest satisfaction and cutting edge hospitality,
<b>Facilities</b>	Wireless high-speed internet access Guest Coin Laundry Outdoor terrace with comfortable loungers Indoor pool and whirlpool Fitness Centre
<b>Accommodation</b>	The Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour Hotel features 228 modern rooms and 8 spacious suites. Many are available with breathtaking ocean or mountain views. All guestrooms also feature free high-speed Internet, Duvet and luxury linens, complimentary coffee and tea, CD player, iron, ironing board, hair dryer, personal safe, deluxe robes, individual climate control, windows that open, seating area, cable television and free daily newspaper.
<b>Restaurants</b>	The hotel showcases a signature restaurant, Fire & Water Fish and Chop House. Here Executive Chef Dave Roger features regional cuisine in a warm, intimate setting that fuses organic dishes with modern decorum.

<b>AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER</b>	Harbour Air The world's largest seaplane airline
<b>Flight details</b>	Victoria Panorama: Their most popular tour departing from Victoria harbour, this half-hour flight is an ideal introduction to seaplane aviation. Your flight will include spectacular vistas of downtown Victoria, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca with the Olympic Mountains in the distance. Photographers especially will enjoy unique views of the buildings ringing the harbour and grand houses perched on the rugged coastline. The splash-down landing is always a highlight. Cost \$99

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