



Your guide to Western Canada

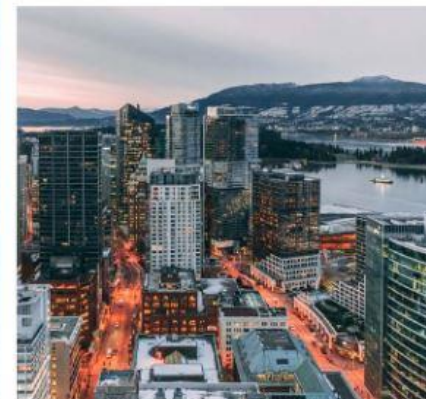
World Heritage-listed national parks full of wild animals like grizzly bears, a coastline teeming with orcas and cities and mountain towns with the world's best bars, green parks and sun-drenched al fresco dining. It's easy to see why western Canada is one of the world's great travel destinations. Craig Tansley looks at what you can't miss on a journey through British Columbia and Alberta...

Vancouver

This is one of the world's great cities – flanked by high mountains (there are ski mountains within 30 minutes of the CBD), built on the sea and with over 1,300 hectares of parks set within its city limits, it's little wonder Vancouver is named as one of the top five cities worldwide for its quality of life. It's also one of Canada's warmest cities in winter; and yet, it's one of its coolest in summer. And it doesn't just look pretty either; this is a city that likes to eat. The best food city in Canada, its culinary scene is one of the most varied on Earth – with everything from exotic street food to the best sushi outside Japan. There's also entire neighbourhoods devoted to night life. It's a thriving metropolis for live music, art and theatre and is dubbed North Hollywood because the film industry love using it for filming locations because everything looks make-believe.

Vancouver Island

Don't forget Vancouver Island. This island – 100km south-west of Vancouver – epitomises everything good about western Canada. It's hardly small (at 30,000km²) so choose a couple of key destinations, or you'll be here a month. Head west through redwood forests till you hit the coast at Tofino – Canada's best surf town. Yes... we said surf town. This might actually be the world's prettiest surf town too, located in a national park that's home to black bears and cougars, and eccentric surfer locals in a rustic surf village. The town looks across the UNESCO Biosphere-Reserve-protected Clayoquot Sound where orca



Opposite page: Strathcona Provincial Park is just one of the many stunning destinations on Vancouver Island.

This page: Vancouver is consistently ranked as one of the top cities to live in worldwide.