

Visit Vancouver: Canada Celebrates 150 Years

Written by Melissa Larsen
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2017 marks Canada's 150th birthday. To celebrate our friendly neighbor to the north, check out these musts for staying, playing and savoring in the vibrant city of Vancouver.



STAY: Whether stylish and modern or old-fashioned and fancy is your preferred type of escape, Vancouver is home to two Fairmont properties that, while different in looks and amenities, each is brimming with luxury (there is a third property at the airport, as well). Fairmont Pacific Rim (pictured) is the epitome of luxury in Vancouver, rated as the "World's Best Business Hotel" by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers and the "No. 1 City Hotel in Canada" by *Travel + Leisure*. If the ultra-sleek lobby—decked in glossy marble, cozy seating, stunning gold fixtures hanging from the ceiling and a jaw-dropping fire feature—doesn't clue you in that this is a special property, check out the unobstructed mountain and harbor views or simply pop into one of the Instagram-ready guest rooms.

Amenities among the 367 rooms may include floor-to-ceiling windows, walk-in closets, old-school games to fill in down time, a record player (complete with a stellar selection of music to choose from) and a glorious soaking tub. Fairmont Gold members even have access to an exclusive lounge where delicious eats and drinks (including the addicting sugar buns on the breakfast menu from the on-site [giovane café + eatery + market](#)), views of Stanley Park and concierge service is at guests' fingertips.

Though luxury spa experiences are abundant in Scottsdale, a trip to Willow Stream Spa at Fairmont Pacific Rim is unlike anything that can be experienced locally. The spa is found on the fifth floor of the hotel, and its 2,500-sq.-ft. outdoor patio greets guests with mountain and downtown views, fire pits, water features, expansive daybeds and a hot tub. Watching steam as the hot tub water hits the cool Vancouver air while nestled under a daybed blanket will melt away any stress before you even step inside a treatment room. The 90-minute locally inspired Coastal Mountain Retreat—featuring a hydrating maple sugar scrub and a replenishing body wrap with a Bio-Maple compound of cocoa and shea butter—is sure to do the trick as well.

Known as Vancouver's "Grand Lady" and the "Castle in the City," the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver is drenched in history and tradition. The castlelike hotel even greets kings, queens and Hollywood royalty year after year. To add to its opulence, the hotel is currently undergoing a guest room renovation project, along with the addition of 8,000 square feet of new meeting and function space, that is set for completion next month.

To complete the regal experience of Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, Notch8 Restaurant & Bar hosts a daily Afternoon High Tea (as well as breakfast, lunch, dinner and bar bites) in its private dining room with tea sandwiches, from-scratch pastries and delicious tea options. Fit for a queen, indeed.



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PLAY: An awe-inspiring medley of cityscape, waterfront and green space, Vancouver offers a never-ending list of things to do and sights to take in. [Stanley Park](#), likened to Central Park, is a nearly 1,000-acre West Coast rainforest, full of walking and biking trails, great restaurants, lovely beaches and historical landmarks. The best way to take in the expansive space is via the Stanley Park Horse-Drawn Tours. Snuggle up under a provided blanket and hear about the history of the park while getting a front-row look at the world-famous Totem Poles, Lions Gate Bridge and the Rose Garden. Stanley Park is also home to Canada's largest aquarium, Vancouver Aquarium (the penguins are a must to visit).

[Granville Island](#) is its own universe of fun, food, arts and shopping, with the Granville Island Market Tour being the perfect opportunity to sample more than 20 market eats and drinks (think cheeses, meats, breads, desserts, coffees, teas and much more) with a knowledgeable tour guide and fellow visitors from around the globe. Granville Island Market features miles of artisans and food and drink vendors at the ready to share their incredible goods. Pop by Lee's Donuts for a famous Hot Honey-Dip, savor a warming chai at [Granville Island Tea Company](#) and nibble on a fresh-baked loaf from Terra Breads.

For a thrill that involves big drops instead of freshly dipped doughnuts, the iconic [Capilano Suspension Bridge](#) (pictured) crosses 230 feet above Capilano River, surrounded by towering evergreens worthy of a Bob Ross painting. Apart from the main bridge, there are various ways to take in the park, including the daring Cliffwalk, made up of narrow cantilevered bridges, stairs and platforms. There is also a great shop on site for loading up on maple-infused treats.



SAVOR: From Japanese-style hot dogs from a street cart and to a five-star steak dinner, Vancouver is a hotbed of gastronomic delights (not to mention it has stellar coffee and craft beer scenes). Though you're sure to wait for a table come brunchtime, you will be rewarded handsomely in the form of a lavender latte and fluffy Belgian waffles at [Café Medina](#) (pictured). Start with a blistered wood-stone flatbread paired with mascarpone and black pepper honey to perk up those taste buds.

[Tableau Bar Bistro](#) at Loden Hotel will transport you to a sidewalk cafe in Paris—with its classy digs, warm woods, golden light and checkerboard flooring—and a French-inspired menu. Share a charcuterie plate and oysters before digging into a hearty burger with frites.

If you're looking to see and be seen, grab a seat by the floor-to-ceiling window at the three-story [Black + Blue](#). A sexy vibe oozes from every corner of this glamorous dining destination, and the food impresses as much as the atmosphere. For a taste of all that Black + Blue has to offer, shell out for the Meat & Seafood Platter, complete with Canadian prime strip loin, prawns, Atlantic lobster tail, veggies and more.

For those staying at Fairmont Pacific Rim, a memorable meal can be found upon stepping into the lobby. The Raw Bar at the Lobby Lounge is the city's first 100-percent Ocean Wise sushi destination named by the Vancouver Aquarium (this ensures responsible and sustainable seafood choices). Buckle in for the Omakase (chef's choice) which allows the sushi chef to create a unique menu to showcase new, favorite or featured items. Unique pieces that might grace your plate include geoduck, sablefish and abalone. ([Fairmont Pacific Rim's](#) is also home to a just-opened restaurant, [Botanist](#). The space and menu is inspired by the principles of botany of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest.)

To Learn More

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver fairmont.com/hotel-vancouver.

Fairmont Pacific Rim fairmont.com/pacific-rim-vancouver.