

## **MEDIA GUEST PROGRAMME**

Tourism Vancouver Island is developing positive and long-lasting relationships with local, national, and international journalists who experience the delights of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, and recount those experiences to their readership.

We are able to offer a number of services to qualified journalists to assist with research, such as arranging discounted or complimentary accommodations, admission to attractions, assistance with suggestions and/or important connections, and itinerary preparation. We also act as liaison with public and private sector tourism partners.

We generally require several weeks advance notice to arrange to host journalists, however, this may be flexible. Tourism Vancouver Island does not provide complimentary transportation to and from Canada, although we are able to work with government agencies that may be able to provide this additional assistance. We do not provide per diem allowances, nor do we usually provide meals to visiting journalists, however in certain circumstances this is flexible.

The following information is required to assist in hosting a journalist:

- tentative arrival and departure dates
- story focus
- an assignment letter from editor or several clippings from recently published work
- accommodation preferences
- Any special needs or requests

For further information, and to begin planning your visit to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, please phone Tourism Vancouver Island at (250) 740-1213 or fax (250) 754-3599. You may also contact us via email at [media@tourismvi.ca](mailto:media@tourismvi.ca).

*Everyone needs a little Island time.*



# Travel Media Profile

<b>Details</b> <i>(to be completed by Media)</i>	
Publication / Network	
Media Type <small>(newspaper, magazine, travel show, TV, radio, website, business, lifestyle, travel)</small>	
Visit dates	
Media/crew names and titles <small>(please list all travellers)</small>	
No. in party	
Editorial / Company name	
Key Contact Person <small>(please include address, phone, fax, email, website)</small>	
Feature Title	
Feature Content / Interest	
Feature Length	
Airdate / Publication date	
Market area / demographics	
Circulation / Audience size	

Advertising Value (CAD\$)	
PR Value (CAD\$)	
Coverage for Tourism Vancouver Island (i.e. will phone number or <a href="http://www.VancouverIsland.travel">www.VancouverIsland.travel</a> be included?)	
If freelance, please advise if you are on assignment (please attach assignment letter)	
Specific Requirements or Specific Services Requested (please provide details of your request for assistance or any special needs)	

*Thank you for your interest in Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands  
and for completing the information requested.  
The Tourism Vancouver Island Media Relations Department will contact you directly.*

*Tourism Vancouver Island  
501 – 65 Front Street, Nanaimo, British Columbia, V9R 5H9, Canada  
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## HISTORY

### In the musical words of Sam Cooke: *Wonderful World (Don't Know Much)*

- It is believed that the first people to inhabit Vancouver Island were Native people between 5,000 to 10,000 years ago
- 1774 – The Spanish frigate Santiago anchors near Nootka Sound. Members of the Nuuchah-nulth came aboard the ship to trade goods
- 1778 – Captain Cook traded goods with the Native people near the island's western shoreline. Sea otter furs were traded for European goods
- 1794 – The first circumnavigation of Vancouver Island by Captain Vancouver which proved it was an island
- Vancouver Island was originally named 'Quadra and Vancouver's Island' in reference to the friendly meetings between Captain Quadra (Spain) and Captain Vancouver
- Many landmarks on and around Vancouver Island are named after the Spanish
- 1834 – Humpback, gray, blue and minke whales are hunted for their oils, and killed in such high numbers that it takes less than a century to put the species near extinction
- 1846 - The 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel is the location of the border between Canada and the US, established by the Oregon Treaty
- 1849 – Vancouver Island becomes a Crown Colony of Great Britain, and the whole island was leased to the Hudson's Bay Company for seven shillings a year
- 1850 – Richard Blanshard arrives to take office as the first governor of Vancouver Island
- 1852 – a townsite is established around Fort Victoria, and the name is changed to Victoria
- 1866 – the mainland and Vancouver Island politically merged, and was then known together as the colony of British Columbia
- 1867 – The Dominion of Canada was established by the British North America Act
- 1868 – Victoria is named the capital of the Colony of BC
- 1871 – British Columbia joined the Dominion and became the sixth province. Victoria was established as the capital of the Province of British Columbia
- 1881 – Vancouver Island population is tallied at 17,292 according to BC's first official census

Don't Know Much About History

- 1886 – The Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology opens in Victoria...later becomes the Royal British Columbia Museum. The Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway (E&N) is completed from Esquimalt to Nanaimo
- 1898 – The principal Legislative buildings are completed
- 1905 – The Canadian Pacific Railway begins construction of the Empress Hotel in Victoria
- 1911 – Strathcona Provincial Park becomes Vancouver Island's first provincial preserve

*(Sources: cvic.bc.ca; Victoria & Vancouver Island an Altitude SuperGuide by Dan KlingleSmith)*

For thousands of years before Captain Cook's arrival on the shores of Nootka Sound in 1778, the First Nations people lived in the Vancouver Island Region. The powerful art and enthralling legends of Vancouver Island, Victoria, and the Gulf Islands' ancient Native cultures have captured the imaginations of visitors for more than 200 years.

First Nations communities throughout the region are welcoming visitors to learn from them through cultural centres, historic sites, art galleries, special events, and tours. Exploring the mystical and compelling world of First Nations culture is a rewarding and enlightening experience. Please respect the culture and sensitivity of these sacred areas. Most Islands communities feature local Native history and artifacts in their museums and artworks by local Native artists in their galleries.

For more information, please visit [www.VancouverIsland.Travel](http://www.VancouverIsland.Travel) or [www.HelloBC.com/vi](http://www.HelloBC.com/vi)

## OVERVIEW page 1

Nestled along Canada's West Coast, the Vancouver Island region is a paradise of tranquil islands, pristine coastlines, and emerald forests, where the ever-present Pacific Ocean shapes the scenery and softens the climate.

Lush old-growth rainforests where the trees form a cool canopy over hiking trails, sparkling wave-swept beaches that stretch for miles, majestic mountains with glittering glaciers and snow-capped peaks, crystal-clear rivers teeming with fish, sun-dappled lakes surrounded by parkland, alpine meadows filled with wild flowers, rolling vistas of farmland and vineyards – it's one awe-inspiring view after another.

Geographically, the Vancouver Island region is situated less than twenty minutes by air from Vancouver, BC and Seattle, WA. The region encompasses:

- Vancouver Island itself, a huge island measuring approximately 32,260 square kilometres (12,455 square miles)
- the location of Victoria, British Columbia's capital city
- hundreds of islands and islets, among which are the serene Gulf Islands
- and a sizable portion of the mainland's fjord-like coastline.

And, thanks to the warming currents of the Pacific Ocean and the protection of the Coast Mountains, the Vancouver Island region has the mildest climate in Canada, making any time of year an ideal time to visit.

The Vancouver Island region is home to some amazing creatures. The region is a top destination among international birders with over 220 species sighted each year. One of the main reasons this is such a birding hot spot is geographical: the Vancouver Island region is situated on the Pacific Flyway, a major bird migration route. This means that in addition to the long list of resident birds, a multitude of species stop here to rest and feed and many stay for whole seasons. In fact, more birds remain in the Vancouver Island region during the winter than anywhere else in the country, making birding a true year-round activity.

Awe-inspiring sights include the experiences from whale watching excursions to catch sight of the magnificent Pacific Gray Whales or the Orcinus Orca also known as Killer Whale. Extensive killer whale research has been done over the years, and as a result whale watching companies follow guidelines to ensure the whales are not threatened by tour boats. The tours range from high-speed Zodiac adventures to relaxing cruises on yachts. Often, other mammals, such as porpoises, seals, dolphins, sea lions, bears, eagles and a multitude of other birds, are also spotted on whale watching adventures.

Whatever your interests, you're sure to find your amazing experience here.



## OVERVIEW page 2

The word *science* comes from the Latin "scientia," meaning knowledge.

Here in the Vancouver Island region, you'll not only create memories, but you'll have opportunities to learn as you explore.

City sights and natural wonders, glorious gardens and intriguing heritage sites, family attractions and spectacular parks — there are so many great things to see in the Vancouver Island region! On a guided tour, you don't need to think about transportation, parking, and distance between sights. The tour company handles all that. Just relax and enjoy yourself.

Guided sightseeing tours are an excellent way to get an overview of a community. Walking tours, coach tours, and horse-drawn carriage tours are available which highlight the points of interest in a town or city. The knowledgeable guides that lead these tours have a wealth of information and can provide you with fascinating details you'd miss on your own. Some tour companies offer tours in languages other than English, and interpreters and multi-lingual guides can be arranged for groups.

If you have a specific area of interest, chances are good there's a tour just for you. There are tours that focus on gardens, vineyards, First Nations culture, art studios and galleries, breweries, cuisine, historic sites and heritage buildings, parks, industry, agriculture, and more. Seasonal tours like cemetery tours at Halloween and city lights tours at Christmas are also available. Customized tours for groups can also be arranged. If you are drawn to a particular activity, such as hiking, kayaking, whale and wildlife viewing, diving, or rafting, there is a wide array of guided adventures throughout the region.

And, then there are the attractions: bug zoos and butterfly gardens, wildlife refuge centres and sanctuaries and salmon hatcheries, whale centres and military forts, steam trains and carriage rides, historic lighthouses and sawmills, and museums with family friendly exhibits on forestry, maritime exploration, and aviation. The list of attractions goes on and on.

Want to make your vacation even more exciting? Come during one of the many family festivals like the Pacific Rim Whale Festival, the Campbell River Children's Festival, the Nanaimo Bathtub Races, the Parksville Beach Festival and KidFest, the Victoria Folk Festival, and many, many more.

In addition to all the great things to see and do, you'll find Vancouver Island is a place where families are more than welcome. Travelling the region with your family is easy and many businesses and accommodation properties have services and facilities especially for kids.



## OVERVIEW page 3

Although Canada is a bilingual country with French as its second language, English is the most widely spoken language in British Columbia.

In addition to French culture, the Vancouver Island region has a multitude of ethnic diversity. You'll find everything from the historic Chinese culture as you walk through Victoria's China Town, to cultural celebrations such as the Francophone Maple Sugar Festival to Oktoberfest, and from the Taiwanese Lantern Festivals to multi-cultural events celebrating music and song.

You're sure to find endless culture throughout Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Here are some tidbits to get you started with our cultural diversity:

Sointula was founded in 1901 by a group of Finnish visionaries that moved to Malcolm Island to establish a colony based on utopian ideals. It was named, "Sointula," a Finnish word for harmony. The vision was to create a society where property was communal; everyone shared, everyone participated and everyone was equal.(island.net/~sointula). Sointula's fascinating history is preserved in its historic buildings and at the Sointula Museum.

The first Chinese immigrants came to Victoria in 1858 because of the gold rush, and pitched tents or built shacks along the edge of a ravine (now Johnson Street). By 1880 Victoria's Chinatown formed the largest Chinese community in all of Canada (BCArchives.gov.bc.ca).

Join the merriment as Port Alberni celebrates Oktoberfest annually with song, dance, good food and drink! The largest Oktoberfest on Vancouver Island is organized by The Port Alberni Europa Club, formed in 1974 with the purpose of bringing together the emigrants and traditions of Europe.

Afternoon tea, a British tradition, is enjoyed in various tea houses throughout Vancouver Island. For a highlight of your trip, enjoy tea at the famous Empress Hotel, in Victoria's Inner Harbour.

Duncan, in the Cowichan region, is known as the City of Totems for the dozens of totems downtown and along the highway. Duncan is the ancestral home of the Cowichan tribes. The Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre is one of the most popular attractions in the area and features cultural displays and demonstrations. Free, guided totem tours of Duncan are offered Tuesday to Saturday, from May through August. For a self-guided tour, pamphlets showing locations of the city's many totems are available at the Info Centre.

These and more cultural activities can be found in the Vancouver Island region, and we can help identify your interests. For more information, visit [www.VancouverIsland.Travel](http://www.VancouverIsland.Travel)



Don't Know Much About the French I Took

## WHERE IS VANCOUVER ISLAND?

Vancouver Island is located in south western British Columbia, Canada, and is the largest island off the North American west coast. Tucked against the mainland edge of British Columbia and the north shore of Washington's Olympic Peninsula, Vancouver Island stretches approximately 500 km (300 miles) southeast to northwest and has an average width of 100 km (62 miles). At 32,260 sq km, it is comparable in size to countries such as the Netherlands or Taiwan yet the population is under 1 million. In fact, the largest community has approximately 350,000 people (greater Victoria), with the second largest city being Nanaimo with a population of approximately 80,000.

The Vancouver Island region is one of 6 geographic regions of British Columbia, and encompasses Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and a portion of the lower mainland from Bute Inlet to Rivers Inlet. The climate of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands is extremely changeable. Summertime is reliably sunny, warm (not hot) and with frequent ocean breezes. Temperatures in summer go to average highs in the mid 20's Celsius (70 to 80 Fahrenheit) but evenings can be cool. In winter, Vancouver Island is the mildest of all British Columbia, with temperatures ranging just below 0 Celsius (32 Fahrenheit).

Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands offer you experiences in golfing, salt and freshwater fishing, boating, sailing, kayaking, whale and wildlife watching, caving, hiking, scuba diving, skiing, shopping, dining, and more. Whether you're yearning for the solitude of a surf-swept beach or the charm of a rural village, the silence of the forest or the hustle and bustle of the provincial capital, you'll find it all and much more on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

There are no bridges or tunnels linking Vancouver Island to the British Columbia mainland, but getting here is half the fun. Ferry service is offered from several mainland British Columbia and Washington State departure points, as well as between ports on Vancouver Island, Victoria, and the Gulf Islands. Air service to various island locations includes scheduled flights by major airlines, helicopter and floatplane service, and chartered flights. Motorcoach service includes scheduled, charter, and tour services to and from numerous Vancouver Island and mainland destinations (incorporating ferry service).

For more information on transportation and getting around Vancouver Island, please visit the transportation pages at [www.VancouverIsland.Travel](http://www.VancouverIsland.Travel).

The topographical terrain of the region is as varied as the ethnic diversity. The region's landscape includes rolling farmlands producing award winning grapes and delectable culinary produce and products, mountainous terrain with fabulous hiking, skiing and winter opportunities, as well as stunning panoramas and settings throughout the seasons.

The Vancouver Island region is broken down into 7 distinct geographic regions as follows:

1. South Island (including Victoria)
2. South Central Island or 'Cowichan'
3. Central Island (including Nanaimo, Parksville & Qualicum Beach)
4. North Central Island (including Comox Valley & Campbell River)
5. North Island (from Sayward north to Port Hardy)
6. Pacific Rim (including Port Alberni, Bamfield, Ucluelet & Tofino)
7. Gulf Islands (including Gabriola, Salt Spring, the Penders, Mayne, Galiano and Saturna)

Each of these seven regions is spectacular within their own qualities. Once you visit, you'll see why Vancouver Island is so special and will leave you wanting to come back for more. Visit [www.VancouverIsland.Travel](http://www.VancouverIsland.Travel) for more information.

## AWARD WINNING DESTINATION

One visit and you'll realize why Vancouver Island has been voted Best North American Island from 2000 to 2008 by readers of Condé Nast Traveler magazine, and voted Best Island in Continental US/Canada by readers of Travel + Leisure Magazine for 2001, 2002, 2005 & 2007.

The sights, sounds, tastes, and thrills are sure to delight the young and the young-at-heart.

### **For more information:**

Contact Tourism Vancouver Island's Media Department for assistance with travel & itinerary planning. We can provide you with itinerary suggestions that are customized to suit the length and focus of your stay. If you prefer certain themes, we can provide details on themed tours such as gardens, spas, outdoor adventure, cuisine, First Nations, and more.

We have provided information for story ideas to aid in your planning at <http://www5.hellobc.com/travelmedia/vancouver-island.aspx>

For samples of images available for non-commercial editorial support, please visit <http://www5.hellobc.com/travelmedia/imagebank.aspx> or [www.tourismvi.ca/library/media](http://www.tourismvi.ca/library/media)

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**But I know that one and one is two  
and if this one could be with you  
what a wonderful world this would be**

## **Annual Events**

*The Vancouver Island region offers hundreds of events year round. Following is a sampling of popular annual events throughout the year. For additional listings, please visit [www.harbourliving.ca](http://www.harbourliving.ca).*

(Events subject to change – please confirm details with the event organizer prior to visiting or publishing information)

### **FEBRUARY**

#### **Maple Sugar Festival, Nanaimo**

French Canadian Traditions come to life with five days of music, dancing, storytelling, demonstrations, and food sampling at Beban Park.

[www.francophonenanaimo.org/festival/fest\\_en.htm](http://www.francophonenanaimo.org/festival/fest_en.htm)

### **MARCH**

#### **Pacific Rim Whale Festival, Ucluelet / Tofino**

Celebrate the gray whale migration, as an estimated 22,000 gray whales make the 16,000 km round-trip journey between their mating and calving lagoons on the Mexican Baja Peninsula and their summer feeding grounds in the Bering and Chukchi Seas near the Arctic. Daily festival events, educational and fun activities will entertain the entire family. Whale watching opportunities from boat or shore are available.

[www.pacificrimwhalefestival.org](http://www.pacificrimwhalefestival.org)

#### **Words on the water, Campbell River**

The Words on the Water weekend is a presentation of contemporary West Coast writers. The authors will present individual readings and musical entertainment will be interspersed with light readings. This festival is held at the Maritime Heritage Centre.

[www.wordsonthewater.ca](http://www.wordsonthewater.ca)

### **APRIL**

#### **The Brant Festival, Parksville / Qualicum Beach**

Celebration of nature, art, and outdoors that coincides with the migratory visit of over 20,000 Pacific Black Brant Geese. With over twenty events, exhibits, shows, and competitions, the festival brings nature and people together to celebrate Oceanside's diversified wildlife and their unique habitat

[www.brantfestival.bc.ca](http://www.brantfestival.bc.ca)

#### **Silva Bay Wooden Boat Launch and Maritime Festival, Gabriola Island**

This event coincides with the end of the semester at the Silva Bay Shipyard School, and involves the boat-building students launching their creations in an exciting display. Other festivities include tours of the visiting vessels, live entertainment on the outdoor stage, the graduation ceremonies and many informative workshop sessions with true maritimers.

[www.boatschool.com/festival](http://www.boatschool.com/festival)

### **Salt Spring Island Saturday Market, Salt Spring Island**

Visit the popular Saturday Market on Salt Spring Island. The market is open each Saturday, from April 1, (or Easter weekend, whichever is earlier) through the last Saturday in October, from about 8:30 to 3:30, rain or shine. Located at Centennial Park in the heart of Ganges, the market offers internationally acclaimed arts and crafts from Canada's "Island of the Arts". You'll see works from potters, jewelers, fiber artists, woodworkers, and fine decorative arts. Take home farmstead cheeses, organic foods, music, and experience free festive fun. Vendors must "make it, bake it, or grow it" themselves. Enjoy meeting more than 100 artisans of all types; contributors to Salt Spring's international reputation as a hotbed of fine world-class artists and organic farmers.

[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

## **MAY**

### **Annual Shorebird Festival, Tofino**

Celebrating the annual migration of thousands of migratory shorebirds with slide shows, lectures, birding outings and other shorebird-related events. The combination of expansive mudflats and long sandy beaches create an ideal habitat for shorebirds. These habitats provide the opportunity for hundreds of thousands of shorebirds to feed and rest before they continue their impressive journey north. The Annual Shorebird Festival was created to raise awareness and appreciation about this remarkable migration. To find out more about shorebirds, drop by the Raincoast Interpretive Centre and pick up a copy of our Bird Checklist and Birding in Tofino Brochure.

[www.raincoasteducation.org](http://www.raincoasteducation.org)

### **Island Fantasy Ball, Nanaimo**

The competition attracts top-quality ballroom dancers from many locations, and gives local dancers the opportunity to compete with the best of their peers.

[www.islandfantasyball.com](http://www.islandfantasyball.com)

### **Empire Days Celebration, Nanaimo**

Nanaimo boasts the oldest annual continuous community celebrations without a break of Victoria Day in the Commonwealth. Take part in this exciting celebration extended over several days. A May Queen is chosen and the Maypole is danced, the midway is busy and the parade is very popular with all including bands, floats, clowns, fire engines and horses.

[www.nanaimoempiredays.com](http://www.nanaimoempiredays.com)

### **Cumberland's Empire Days Celebration, Comox Valley**

Visit the historic coal mining Village of Cumberland for their annual Empire Days celebrations, live music, parade, dances, kids' activities and more!

[www.discovercomoxvalley.com](http://www.discovercomoxvalley.com) [www.cumberlandbc.org/events](http://www.cumberlandbc.org/events)

### **Salt Spring Island Saturday Market, Salt Spring Island**

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[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

## **JUNE**

### **Edge to Edge Marathon, Ucluelet / Tofino**

Run the official marathon distance between Tofino and Ucluelet. Take on the challenge of the West Coast! Starting at the small village of Tofino, you will run a slightly undulating scenic course through Pacific Rim National Park, finishing in the District of Ucluelet - a perfect Marathon distance through a perfectly "natural" course.

[www.edgetoedgemarathon.com](http://www.edgetoedgemarathon.com)

### **Annual JazzFest International, Victoria**

Ten hot days and nights of the coolest music in town. Over 300 regional, national, and international musicians perform jazz, blues, and world music.

<http://jazzvictoria.ca>

### **Annual Floating Boat and Marine Trade Show, Nanaimo**

This is a fun weekend for the whole family! Come down to the Port of Nanaimo and see all of the wonderful and interesting boats of every shape and size.

[www.vancouverislandboatshow.com](http://www.vancouverislandboatshow.com)

### **Salt Spring Island Saturday Market, Salt Spring Island**

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[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

### **The Great Walk, Gold River to Tahsis**

The Tahsis Lion's Club Annual Great Walk is a grueling 63.5 kilometre (40 miles) walk or run on gravel logging road between Gold River and Tahsis. This event is gaining the reputation of being North America's toughest walkathon.

## **JULY**

### **Dancing Man Festival, Gabriola Island**

Two weeks of folk, rock, blues, and country music. Additional fun for the family includes activities such as art show, workshops, kids science show, great food and more. Join in the fun!

[www.dancingman.ca](http://www.dancingman.ca)

### **Dragon Boat Festival, Nanaimo**

Exciting competition of colourful dragon boats. Dragonboat racing is the fastest growing team sport world-wide. The colourful boats and the competition commemorate the life and death of Qu Yuan, a prominent poet and minister of ancient China who was cast into exile as a result of his politically sensitive writings. Distraught and inconsolable, Qu Yuan drowned himself in the Mi Lor River. Local fishermen raced to the tragic scene in their long, swift boats. To prevent his body from being despoiled by the fish, they splashed their oars and beat their drums to disperse them and threw rice dumplings into the river in attempts to as a distraction. Today's Dragonboat Festivals re-enact both the human tragedy and the sense of community that this legend evokes.

[www.nanaimodragonboat.com](http://www.nanaimodragonboat.com)

### **Filomi Days, Port Hardy**

Once a year, Port Hardy holds a celebration in Rotary Park on the third weekend of July to acknowledge its natural resource based economy. The three syllables, **Fi**, **Lo** and **Mi**, stand for "Fishing, Logging and Mining". The celebration includes festivities in the park such as activities for children, fundraising concessions, entertainment, beer gardens, a dunk-tank, balloons, bake sales, craft sales, and fireworks. A dance for each age group and a parade are also held on Filomi Days weekend.

[www.filomi.com](http://www.filomi.com)

### **Pacific Rim Summer Festival, Tofino**

A festival of music, dance and the arts, presented in the spectacular setting of the west coast of Vancouver Island. Canadian and international musicians perform chamber and world music.

<http://pacificrimarts.ca>

### **Nanaimo Marine Festival & 'Great' International Bathtub Race, Nanaimo**

Kids' treasure hunt, beer gardens, sail past parade, Vancouver Island's biggest summertime fireworks display, and much more. the "Great RACE" finishes at Departure Bay in Nanaimo covering a very grueling course that leaves Nanaimo harbor circles Entrance Island and then up to and around Winchelsea Island and then back to Departure Bay in Nanaimo.

[www.bathtubbing.com](http://www.bathtubbing.com)

### **Ukee Days, Ucluelet**

Salmon and oyster barbecues, Whiskey Dock Run, kids' games, live entertainment, exhibits, logger sports, music, and many other activities

[www.uclueletinfo.com](http://www.uclueletinfo.com)

### **Comox Valley Youth Music Centre Concert Series, Comox Valley**

The Comox Valley Youth Music Centre produces a renowned Summer Festival that features students and faculty. The International Youth Music School's festival component offers exciting concerts, recitals and theatre productions that span the month of July. Celebrated international artists appear in concert during July, and they join the CYMC Festival Orchestra and the CYMC Pacific Jazz Ensemble in an outstanding series of events. While musicians are practicing devotedly in preparation for concerts, youthful actors, dancers and singers are rehearsing feverishly for a musical theatre production that always miraculously jells just in time for opening night.

[www.cymc.ca](http://www.cymc.ca)

### **Vancouver Island Musicfest, Comox Valley**

Vancouver Island MusicFest has been bringing great roots and world music to the Comox Valley and Vancouver Island since 1995. The festival offers over 200 musical performers on 5 fully programmed stages as well as instructional workshops, yoga sessions, an interactive kidzzone, art displays, a beer and cider tent, top-notch food and craft vendors, non-profit information displays, on-site camping and a magical riverside venue at the Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds.

[www.islandmusicfest.com](http://www.islandmusicfest.com)

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[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

### **The Hornby Festival of the Arts, Hornby Island**

Nine-day festival presenting twelve to sixteen amazing concerts. Venues include the Community Hall, or outdoors with a forest or sea backdrop.

[www.hornbyfestival.bc.ca](http://www.hornbyfestival.bc.ca)

### **Parksville Beach Festival, Parksville Beach**

Three weeks of family beach fun featuring the Canadian Open Sand Sculpting Competition and evening entertainment.

[www.parksvillebeachfest.ca](http://www.parksvillebeachfest.ca)

### **Annual Filberg Festival, Comox**

The Filberg Festival is a family-friendly festival presenting four days of entertainment for the whole family. Throughout the Festival weekend, a wide variety of music and entertainment is presented at different venues on the grounds of the Filberg Heritage Lodge & Park. Although the Filberg Festival was originally known as an arts and craft festival, it has become increasingly well known for its music program.

[www.filbergfestival.com](http://www.filbergfestival.com)

## AUGUST

### **Summer Time Blues Festival, Nanaimo**

Free live Blues concerts featuring some of Canada's best artists throughout the month of August.

[www.nanaimobluesfestival.com](http://www.nanaimobluesfestival.com)

### **Vancouver Island Exhibition, Nanaimo**

Annual fair, agricultural and livestock exhibition with live music, a carnival and other events.

[www.viex.ca](http://www.viex.ca)

### **Annual Kidfest, Parksville**

Building sandcastles, learning Hip Hop dance steps, experiencing the marvels of science, and listening to quality entertainment are only a few of the many exciting activities available for free or a low cost. Children won't leave Kidfest without something in their pockets and smiles on their faces! Family fun is in abundance on the sunny beachfront of Parksville! [www.kidfest.ca](http://www.kidfest.ca)

### **Annual Classic Car Show'n Shine, Chemainus**

Over 100 classic and vintage cars plus music and entertainment.

[www.chemainus.bc.ca](http://www.chemainus.bc.ca)

### **Victoria Fringe Festival, Victoria**

Eleven days of independently produced alternative theatre.

[www.intrepidtheatre.com](http://www.intrepidtheatre.com)

### **Originals Only Fine Art Show, Comox Valley**

Featuring some of Vancouver Island's finest artists, painters and sculptures all in one outstanding exhibit. About 70 artists and sculptors working in a wide range of mediums and styles will gather to sell their original work. All art is original and created by the artist who is present in the booth during the entire show. It is open to artists living on Vancouver Island and the surrounding outer islands only.

[www.originalsonly.ca](http://www.originalsonly.ca)

### **Comox Valley Fall Fair, Comox Valley**

A fun family event where you have hands on farm, food and craft events, equestrian events, dog shows, antiques, heritage exhibitions, kid's activities, and live entertainment.

[www.cvexhibition.com](http://www.cvexhibition.com)

### **Salt Spring Island Saturday Market, Salt Spring Island**

Visit the popular Saturday Market on Salt Spring Island. The market is open each Saturday, from April 1, (or Easter weekend, whichever is earlier) through the last Saturday in October, from about 8:30 to 3:30, rain or shine. Located at Centennial Park in the heart of Ganges, the market offers internationally acclaimed arts and crafts from Canada's "Island of the Arts". You'll see works from potters, jewelers, fiber artists, woodworkers, and fine decorative arts. Take home farmstead cheeses, organic foods, music, and experience free festive fun. Vendors must "make it, bake it, or grow it" themselves. Enjoy meeting more than 100 artisans of all types; contributors to Salt Spring's international reputation as a hotbed of fine world-class artists and organic farmers.

[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

## SEPTEMBER

### **Vancouver Island Blues Bash, Victoria**

The Victoria Jazz Society is a professional arts organization committed to presenting the highest quality of jazz possible to our community, by presenting music in performance, with acclaimed musicians. Since 1981, through its innovative artistic vision, the VJS has attracted thousands of leading artists from around the world to perform in Victoria. Hundreds of thousands of fans have enjoyed many outstanding festival and non-festival performances that have featured the full spectrum of jazz and improvised music - from the traditional and mainstream, to the avant-garde, including worldbeat and the blues.

<http://jazzvictoria.ca>

### **Cowichan Wine & Culinary Festival, Cowichan Valley**

A weekend event celebrating Vancouver Island wines, culinary excellence, and original music and art. Events take place at local vineyards, and include a grape stomp, wine auction, and dance.

[www.wines.cowichan.net](http://www.wines.cowichan.net)

### **Harbour City 1/2 Marathon & 10 km Road Race, Nanaimo**

Featuring BC's Richest Prize Purse for a Half Marathon.

[www.harbourcityhalf.com](http://www.harbourcityhalf.com)

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[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

### **Feast of Fields, Vancouver Island**

Community celebration from farmer to fisher, from winery to forager, from restaurant to microbrewer, Feast of Fields celebrates the gastronomic excellence of Vancouver Island. With a wine glass and cotton serviette in hand, you will be awed by diverse tastes, sights and smells as you wander through fields sampling from over eighty restaurants, microbreweries, wineries and producers. Limited tickets.

[www.feastoffields.com](http://www.feastoffields.com)

## **OCTOBER**

### **Annual Gabriola Island Thanksgiving Gallery and Studio Tour, Gabriola Island**

Self-guided, open-studio tour featuring professional artists and craftspeople living and working on Gabriola Island. Free admission.

[www.gabriolaartscouncil.org](http://www.gabriolaartscouncil.org)

### **Annual Royal Victoria Marathon, Victoria**

Listed as one of the top ten destination marathons by Runner's World Magazine. The Royal Victoria Marathon course is AIMS and IAAF certified and can be used as a qualifier for the Boston Marathon.

[www.royalvictoriamarathon.com](http://www.royalvictoriamarathon.com)

### **Sidney Fine Art Show, Sidney**

Artists from the Peninsula and across Canada work all year to produce hundreds of never-before-seen pieces in a wide variety of media. All works for sale.

[www.sidney.ca](http://www.sidney.ca) [www.cacsp.com](http://www.cacsp.com)

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[www.saltspringmarket.com](http://www.saltspringmarket.com)

## NOVEMBER

### **Clayoquot Oyster Festival, Tofino**

The Clayoquot Festival of Oysters and the Sea is a celebration of the abundance and beauty of the sea. In Clayoquot Sound, oysters give us lots to celebrate about.

[www.oystergala.com](http://www.oystergala.com)

### **Festival of Lights, Ladysmith**

Christmas light festival in beautiful historic downtown Ladysmith. Light up Ceremony includes entertainment, concessions, fireworks, Santa, and parade. From the last Thursday in November until the first Sunday in January, Ladysmith comes alive with over 100,000 shimmering lights.

[www.ladysmithfol.com](http://www.ladysmithfol.com)

### **Milner Christmas Magic, Qualicum Beach**

See the gardens adorned with beautiful lights, enjoy the musical talents of local musicians, and sample the sweet treats in the tearoom.

[www.milnergardens.org](http://www.milnergardens.org)

### **Kris Kringle Craft Market, Qualicum Beach**

This is an exceptional one-of-a-kind juried art and craft show featuring more than 120 high quality crafters in a beautifully decorated show. Wander though the show at a leisurely pace, visit with the crafters at their booths, drink in the mulled wine, savor the smoked salmon, relish the jams and jellies and nibble at the chocolates. Try on new outfits, jewellery, hats, scarves, belts and purses. Enjoy the wood, fabric, metal and woollen creations and toys – this is a four day shopping event with family fun and entertainment.

<http://www.kriskringle.ca>

### **Cedar-Yellowpoint Country Christmas Tour, Nanaimo**

The Cedar-Yellowpoint Artisan's Country Christmas Tour is a showcase of exceptional and varied skills of artisans. Each year the Artisan's Association has its members open their studios, shops and farms to the public so they can experience the artisans' environments and to sample and purchase their artwork, hand-made products and handcrafts.

[www.cyartisans.com](http://www.cyartisans.com)

### **Festival of Trees, Victoria**

Every year, the Festival of Trees transforms The Fairmont Empress into a lush forest of beautifully decorated trees to raise funds for BC Children's Hospital. As sponsors of this event, local businesses, organizations and individuals decorate the trees - in a sometimes wacky, often irreverent and always beautiful fashion. The trees are then displayed throughout The Fairmont Empress over the holiday season, beginning mid November with the kick-off decorating gala, through to early January.

<http://bcchf.ca>

## DECEMBER

### **Festival of Trees, Nanaimo**

Choose your favourite tree at this popular long-running holiday event. Highlights include a dazzling display of Christmas lights, decorations, and trees – many of which will be raffled off at the Festival.

[www.viu.ca/festival/](http://www.viu.ca/festival/)

### **Christmas at The Butchart Gardens, Victoria**

Tens of thousands of lights, strolling carolers, children's entertainers, the Festive Brass band, and fabulous food. Experience the open air real ice skating rink, and the 12 days of Christmas display throughout the gardens.

[www.butchartgardens.com](http://www.butchartgardens.com)

### **Milner Christmas Magic, Qualicum Beach**

See the gardens adorned with beautiful lights, enjoy the musical talents of local musicians, and sample the sweet treats in the tearoom. The garden is a sensuous delight. Old growth Douglas firs and cedars frame breathtaking views of the Strait of Georgia. The garden lawns slope gently to meet a precipitous bluff which plunges to the beach below.

[www.milnergardens.org](http://www.milnergardens.org)

**Christmas at Craigdarroch Castle, Victoria**

Craigdarroch Castle is a beautiful historic Victorian-era mansion, built in the 1890s by wealthy BC coal baron Robert Dunsmuir. It is now owned by the Craigdarroch Castle Historical Museum Society and almost totally funded by its 150,000 annual visitors. Visit during the Christmas season and experience music, theatre, children's entertainment and more at Craigdarroch Castle.

[www.craigdarrochcastle.com](http://www.craigdarrochcastle.com)

**Originals Only Fine Art Show, Comox Valley**

Featuring some of Vancouver Island's finest artists, painters and sculptures all in one outstanding exhibit. About 70 artists and sculptors working in a wide range of mediums and styles will gather to sell their original work. All art is original and created by the artist who is present in the booth during the entire show. It is open to artists living on Vancouver Island and the surrounding outer islands only.

[www.originalsonly.ca](http://www.originalsonly.ca)

**Bethlehem Walk, Parksville**

Experience the sights and sounds as over 250 volunteers, dressed in costume, re-create the streets of Bethlehem. Wander into shops with candle makers, weavers and blacksmiths; venture into a period bakery with Dead Sea rolls; view fish mongers; participate in the auction house where people can bid on Goliath's sword or Mosses' staff, which turns into a serpent when thrown down on the ground. For additional wonderment, observe a stable with Mary, Joseph and a real newborn baby as well as shepherds as they tend to their livestock.

<http://www.parkvillebaptist.org>

**Festival of Trees, Victoria**

Every year, the Festival of Trees transforms The Fairmont Empress into a lush forest of beautifully decorated trees to raise funds for BC Children's Hospital. As sponsors of this event, local businesses, organizations and individuals decorate the trees - in a sometimes wacky, often irreverent and always beautiful fashion. The trees are then displayed throughout The Fairmont Empress over the holiday season, beginning mid November with the kick-off decorating gala, through to early January.

<http://bcchf.ca>

## Did you know?

**Vancouver Island is the largest island off the North American west coast at over 32,000 square km.**

*With a length of approximately 460 km and an average breadth of 100 km, Vancouver Island is comparable in size to some countries such as the Netherlands and Taiwan. Rain and mild temperatures have fostered the development of temperate rain forests. Vancouver Island is home to two UNESCO biosphere reserves – Clayoquot and Arrowsmith.*

**Salt Spring Island is named for the salty mineral springs located on the north end of the island.**

*Salt Spring Island is famous for sunshine, scenery, and art...Lots of art. A number of Canada's most renowned artists, inspired by the beauty and the tranquil lifestyle, have made their homes on Salt Spring Island. Galleries and artisan studios in the villages and along the country roads offer everything from paintings, sculptures, and prints, to weaving, pottery, stained glass, basketry, and jewellery. ArtCraft, a summer-long exhibition and sale, showcases works by more than 250 Gulf Island artisans.*

**The West Coast Trail was originally built as a lifesaving trail for shipwrecked mariners.**

*Historically this trail is known as the Graveyard of the Pacific. Today this 75 km long trail is world renowned for its awe-inspiring scenery. The entire trail is rather demanding and takes a minimum of five days to complete.*

**The Butchart Gardens was developed on what used to be a limestone quarry owned by Robert Pim Butchart.**

*When the supply was depleted, his wife Jennie decided to refurbish the land and the Sunken Garden now sits atop the site of the old quarry. Today Butchart Gardens offers 55 acres of delightful gardens including 700 varieties of beautiful plants. The gardens, which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004, still remain a family business.*

**Della Falls, in Strathcona Provincial Park, is Canada's highest waterfall, at 440 metres (1,452 feet) and one of the ten highest in the world.**

*In 1899, prospector and trapper Joe Drinkwater discovered Della Falls and named them after his wife. These astonishing waterfalls are situated in the southern section of Strathcona Provincial Park.*

**Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park is home to some of the world's largest spruce trees, some reaching heights in excess of 95 metres (310 feet) and living for 800 years and more.**

*Sitka spruce forests are rarely found more than 80 km inland and at elevations greater than 300 meters. The Park's wide groves of spruce attain a biomass (weight of plants by hectare) that is nearly twice that of a tropical forest. Additionally the park is home to ancient, knotted cedars estimated to be over 1,000 years old. Several hiking trails offer spectacular opportunities for different wilderness experiences.*

**There are some 7,000 known species inhabiting the coastal waters of Vancouver Island, over 200 species of migratory birds and 33 species of land mammals.**

*Wildlife is also the focus of some of the region's annual events, including the Pacific Rim Whale Festival in March, Oceanside's Brant Festival in April, the Tofino Shorebird Festival in May, and the Eagle Extravaganza in Goldstream Provincial Park near Victoria, just to name a few.*

**There are over 1,000 recorded caves on Vancouver Island.**

*Some have been explored and charted, but some still remain undeveloped. Vancouver Island offers numerous opportunities for caving: Join one of the guided or self-guided tours and enjoy the marvelous wonders of nature!*

**There are 1,421 known metallic mineral, coal and industrial mineral occurrences on Vancouver Island.**

**Hornby Island and Nootka Sound are two of the few places in the world where scuba divers can see primitive and elusive six-gill sharks.**

*The sixgill shark is a common species of deep water shark. It is also one of the largest sharks that does not feed on plankton. The shark gets its name from the fact that it has six gill slits. Most other sharks only have five. The sixgill is a large shark and grows to a length of up to 18 feet. Sixgill sharks are found all over the world in temperate and tropical regions, where they have been known to dive as deep as 6000 feet. They swim up to shallower waters at night to feed. Since they spend most of their time in deep water, very little is known about their behavior. (source: seasky.org)*

**Nitinat Lake is a top windsurfing destination in North America**

*During the summer Nitinat Lake has some of the most consistent winds in the world. On a typical sunny day in the early morning there is no wind. From about 10 AM to 11 AM you can look down the lake and see a wind line and within 30 minutes the wind is 15 to 20 knots. As the day progresses the winds will peak at around 2 PM to 3 PM at 25 to 30 knots. On a really good day with a FOG BANK visible at the other end of lake winds will be 25 to 40 knots. As evening approaches and the sun sets, the winds die down and usually stop, at which point you are usually totally exhausted from shredding all day. (source: islandnet.com/~rkashino/Nitinat.htm)*

**There are approximately 100 Provincial Parks (including Marine Parks) and 50 Ecological Reserves in the Vancouver Island region.**

*Virtually everywhere on Vancouver Island you will find scenic Provincial Parks as well as interesting Ecological Reserves. Watch for the signs along the road indicating a nearby Provincial Park or Ecological Reserve.*

**Nanaimo, a mecca for diving adventures, is home to the world's largest upright artificial reef.**

*It was created when the Cape Breton, a decommissioned navy ship, was sunk in 2001 in close proximity to the Saskatchewan, a scuttled navy-class destroyer.*

**There are 9,396 lakes on Vancouver Island.**

**Cathedral Grove is the location of some of the largest Douglas fir trees on Vancouver Island, including one estimated at 800 years old.**

*The awe-inspiring Cathedral Grove is located in MacMillan Provincial Park. On the south side, visitors will find the largest Douglas firs whereas on the north side there are groves of ancient Western red cedar. Visitors can stroll on the trails through the mighty stands of this old-growth coastal forest.*

## Stars Illuminate Vancouver Island

Celebrities of the Vancouver Island region:

- Atom Egoyan, Filmmaker (raised in Victoria)
- Barry Pepper, Actor (born in Campbell River)
- Brendan Fletcher, Actor (born in Comox Valley)
- Cameron Bright, Actor (born in Victoria)
- Cam Neely, Athlete – hockey (born in Comox)
- David Foster, Musician/Producer (born in Victoria)
- Diana Krall, Jazz Musician (born in Nanaimo)
- Emily Carr, Painter/Writer (born in Victoria)
- Jeff Courtnall, Athlete – hockey (born in Duncan)
- Jodelle Ferland, Actor (born in Nanaimo)
- Justin Chatwin, Actor (born in Nanaimo)
- Kim Cattrall, Actor (raised in Comox Valley)
- Nelly Furtado, Singer/Songwriter (born in Victoria)
- Pamela Anderson, Actor (born in Ladysmith)
- Randy Bachman, Musician (lives on Salt Spring Island)
- Raymond Law, Actor (born in Victoria)
- Rick Hansen, Wheelchair Athlete (born in Port Alberni)
- Robert Bateman, Painter (lives on Salt Spring Island)
- Russ Courtnall, Athlete – hockey (born in Duncan)
- Steve Nash, Athlete – basketball (raised in Victoria)

Movies filmed in the Vancouver Island region:

- Are we There Yet? (Ice Cube, Nia Long)
- Bird on a Wire (Mel Gibson, Goldie Hawn)
- Cats & Dogs (Jeff Goldblum, Elizabeth Perkins)
- Clan of the Cave Bear (Darryl Hannah)
- Excess Baggage (Alicia Silverstone, Benicio del Toro, Christopher Walken)
- Final Destination 2 (Ali Larter, A.J. Cook, Michael Landes)
- Insomnia (Robin Williams, Al Pacino)
- Intersection (Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, Lolita Davidovich, Martin Landau)
- Lake Placid (Bill Pullman, Bridget Fonda)
- Little Women (Winona Ryder, Gabriel Byrne, Kirsten Dunst)
- Seven Years in Tibet (Brad Pitt)
- The Fog (Tom Welling, Maggie Grace, Selma Blair)
- The Scarlett Letter (Demi Moore, Gary Oldman, Robert Duvall)
- The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior (Antonia Banderas)
- The Twilight Saga: New Moon (Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner)
- The Wicker Man (Nicolas Cage, Ellen Burstyn)
- The X Files 1993 (Gillian Anderson, David Duchovny)
- Trapped (Charlize Theron, Courtney Love, Kevin Bacon, Stuart Townsend)
- X2 & X-Men: The Last Stand (Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman, Ian McKellen, Halle Berry, Famke Janssen)
- X-Men Origins: Wolverine (Hugh Jackman, Liev Schreiber, Ryan Reynolds)

\*Please note that this is not a comprehensive list, and information should be verified prior to publishing.