

VICTORIA

british columbia full of life

VICTORIA, BC: Full of Life!

Victoria, BC located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, is a city of beautiful contrasts, where the elegance of history mingles with the panache of modern life. Historically, Southern Vancouver Island was populated by the Coast Salish people for thousands of years. Europeans began to explore the island in 1774. The first British settlement on the island was a Hudson's Bay company post, funded in 1843 and was named Fort Victoria. Traditionally known for her British heritage, Victoria is now a mature, cosmopolitan city with luxury resorts, dazzling gardens, creative culinary experiences, invigorating outdoor activities, and exciting attractions for all ages. As an island destination, Victoria offers visitors an escape from the hurried world boasting the mildest year-round climate in Canada and breathtaking natural beauty of the Pacific Coast. Victoria's size is one of its best features; the city exudes a modern, trendy atmosphere, yet is really a small town with everything you need within walking distance. Enjoy a little "island time" in Victoria and take in the heritage architecture and colourful gardens, indulge in the world class dining, find escape in the arts, and take in the natural surrounding scenery and fresh, ocean air.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Where is Victoria?

- Situated on southern tip of Vancouver Island on west coast of Canada, Vancouver Island is 520 km (323 mi.) long with an area of 3,175,000 hectares (7,845,596 acres)
- Vancouver Island is the largest island off the west coast of North America
- Separated from Vancouver, British Columbia, by the Strait of Georgia to the east
- Separated from Washington State, U.S.A., by the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the south and southeast
- Closer to the U.S.A. than to mainland Canada

How many people live in Victoria?

- Victoria municipality population 82,656 (2008)
- Greater Victoria composed of four municipalities: Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Saanich
- Capital Region population 366,516 (2008)

What's the weather like in Victoria?

- Mildest climate in Canada with flowers in bloom year-round
- Average temperature in January is 38°F (4°C)
- Summer is comfortably warm and dry with temperatures from 65-90°F (18-34°C)
- Rainfall during winter months, but rarely snows
- Victoria's average annual rainfall is 1/3 to 1/2 less than Vancouver, Seattle and New York.

VICTORIA ACCOLADES

- 2nd Top Island in North America (*Condé Nast Traveler* Readers' Choice Awards: 2009)
- 4th Top City in the Americas (*Condé Nast Traveler* Readers' Choice Awards: 2009)
- Canada's fittest city (Statistics Canada 2006)
- Canada's cycling capital (Statistics Canada 2006)

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

- Wander 55 acres of spectacular gardens at [The Butchart Gardens](#)
- Discover the underwater world of the Pacific Ocean at [The Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre](#)
- Learn British Columbia's history at the [Royal BC Museum](#)
- Experience the tradition of [Afternoon Tea](#) at one of Victoria's many unique tea houses
- Explore the [Wine Islands](#), the fastest growing wine region in Canada
- Get acquainted with the local wildlife on a [Whale Watching Tour](#)
- Zip around the picturesque Inner Harbour on a [Victoria Harbour Ferry](#)
- Take a [Ghostly Walk](#) and hear the many bone chilling tales of a haunted Victoria
- Soar up above the ground through a lush forest at [Adrena Line Zipline Adventure Tours](#)
- See the sites of the city with [Grayline city bus tour](#)



ARTS & CULTURE

You can feel the pulse of a city through its arts and entertainment. This is certainly notable in Victoria, BC; a city alive with culture! The performing arts are well represented in Victoria with professional theatres and amateur theatre and dance companies showcasing performances in historical playhouses, modern arts centers and small, picturesque community theatres. [The Belfry Theatre](#), housed in an old church originally built in 1892, has garnered international acclaim for its outstanding productions of new comedies, dramas and musicals. [The Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre](#), a new addition to Victoria's vibrant arts and culture scene as of June 2009, brings a fresh take on classical and modern European and North American theatre pieces to the stage. On a musical note, Victoria is a stage for local talent, playing their west coast inspired tunes at several of the cities pubs, restaurants and unique venues. On the formal stage is the [Victoria Symphony](#), boasting sensational unique music concerts and festivals. Victoria is also home to the [Art Gallery of Greater Victoria](#) along with numerous other galleries, exhibits and studios. You can walk from gallery to gallery in Victoria's downtown core or drive the country roads to visit artisans' studios. Victoria and Vancouver Island boast a year-round schedule of cultural entertainment bursting with talent; experience live theatre, art exhibits, music concerts, festivals and films. Be moved. Be inspired. Be entertained.

MAJOR FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN 2010



- April 22, 2010: [Culinaire: Victoria's Food Experience](#) www.culinairevictoria.com
- May 20-30, 2010: [UNO Festival of Solo Performance](#) www.intrepidtheatre.com
- May 30, 2010: [Defending Our Backyard Local Food Festival](#) www.iccbc.ca
- Jun 21-22, 2010: [Telus World Skins Game](#) www.telusskins.com
- Jun 25-Jul 4, 2010: [Victoria JazzFest International](#) www.jazzvictoria.ca
- Aug 1, 2010 (TBC): [Victoria Symphony Splash](#) www.victoriasymphony.ca
- Sept 19, 2010: [Feast of Fields](#) www.feastoffields.com

FUN FACTS!

- Every day in the summer, there are 100 aircraft & 1,000 vessel movements through Victoria's Inner Harbour
- Victoria's Inner Harbour is the only international airport in Canada that is a working harbour
- Victoria's Chinatown is the oldest in Canada & Fan Tan Alley is the narrowest street in Canada
- Victoria has the 2nd highest number of restaurants per capita in North America; San Francisco is number 1
- Victoria has the highest vegetarian food sales per capita in North America
- Victoria is internationally renowned as the "City of Gardens"
- 16% of the Canadian Olympic team that participated in the 2004 Olympic Summer Games in Athens are from Victoria – more than any other city
- 950 hanging baskets adorn lampposts each summer
- There are 3,333 lights on the Parliament Buildings
- The world's tallest free-standing totem pole is located in Victoria's Beacon Hill Park
- Number of cups of tea served annually at The Fairmont Empress Hotel: 750,000
- There are 2,810 farms on Vancouver Island including 974 in Greater Victoria & 691 in the Cowichan Valley
- Spinnakers Brewpub & Restaurant is the oldest licensed brew pub in Canada; the restaurant uses an incredible 95% local produce in its menu



- Fairburn Farm is the only farm in North America raising water buffalo & producing water buffalo products
- Victoria's Roland Green is a two-time World Mountain Bike Champion & Commonwealth Games 2002 gold medalist
- National Geographic Magazine recognized Vancouver Island as one of the best cold-water diving destinations in the world in 2005 & the renowned Jacques Cousteau Society rates the area as only 2nd to the Red Sea for diversity of marine life & water clarity.



- Victoria's waters are home to 3 resident pods of orca whales; totaling at almost 80
- The Maritime Museum of BC is home to North America's oldest operating birdcage elevator
- The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria has the 2nd greatest collection of Asian art in Canada
- Tania Miller is the Victoria Symphony's maestra; the first female to hold the position & the only female conductor of a major orchestra in Canada

HOW TO GET HERE

By Sea

Victoria is well-connected to mainland British Columbia and Washington State by vehicle and passenger ferries and high-speed catamarans. Each day, dozens of ferries cross the straits granting breathtaking views of the rocky coastline, forested islands, inlets, and often, marine wildlife. Victoria's arrival points include the Inner Harbour, the Town of Sidney and Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal.

- **BC Ferries** - 1-888-BC-FERRY (1-888-223-3779) or www.bcferries.com
- **Black Ball Ferry Line (M.V. Coho)** - 250-386-2202 or www.cohoferry.com
- **Victoria Clipper** - 1-800-888-2535 or www.victoriaclipper.com

By Air

Located thirty minutes from downtown Victoria and five minutes from Sidney, Victoria International Airport serves daily flights from Vancouver International Airport and Seattle-Tacoma Airport, as well as direct flights from points throughout Canada and the U.S. Regular float plane and helicopter service to downtown Victoria is available from Vancouver, Vancouver International Airport, and Seattle. Charter flights for sightseeing, wildlife viewing, hiking and fishing excursions and to more remote Vancouver Island locations are also available.

- **Air Canada** - 1-800-247-2262 or www.aircanada.ca
- **Harbour Air Seaplanes** – 1-800-665-0212 or www.harbour-air.com
- **Helijet International Inc.** - 1-800-665-4354 or www.helijet.com
- **Kenmore Air** - 1-866-435-9524 or www.kenmoreair.com
- **Pacific Coastal Airlines** - 1-800-663-2872 or www.pacific-coastal.com
- **West Coast Air** - 1-800-347-2222 or www.westcoastair.com
- **WestJet** - 1-888-937-8538 or www.westjet.com

By Land

Scheduled motorcoach service is available for travel from Vancouver and Seattle to Victoria, as well as to and from other Vancouver Island destinations. Motorcoach travel off the island involves ferry service. Rail service is offered between Victoria and Courtenay, located 219 kilometers (131 miles) north of Victoria, with several stops along the way. Travel options around Greater Victoria and surrounding areas include taxi and limousine service, airporter bus service and public bus transportation. Car, RV, bicycle, motorcycle and scooter rentals are also offered at various locations in the Victoria area.

- **AKAL Airport Shuttle Bus** – 1-877-386-2525 or www.victoriaairporter.com
- **Greyhound** - 1-800-661-8747 or www.greyhound.ca
- **Pacific Coach Lines** - 1-800-661-1725 or www.pacificcoach.com
- **Via Rail** - 1-888-842-7245 or www.viarail.ca

**Current transportation schedules available on the websites noted. For a comprehensive travel guide between Victoria and Vancouver during the Olympic period, please visit www.tourismvictoria.com/calm*

STORY IDEAS

GET FIT IN THE CAPITAL CITY

As host to the 1994 Commonwealth Games, Victoria established itself on the global sports map. Since then, Victoria has maintained a Canadian sporting legacy. Victoria is rated the **fittest city in Canada**, and **Cycling Capital of Canada** (both cited to Statistics Canada 2006) and is home to more Canadian national team athletes per capita than any other city in Canada. Thirty-six per cent of the adult population is active, nearly double the national average. With the **mildest climate in the country**, Victoria is Canada's destination for year-round outdoor adventure. Victoria has built up the reputation as an extremely **walkable** city. The city's beauty and natural surroundings inspire people to get active and enjoy the outdoors. Victoria provides easy access to miles of scenic trails that lead **hikers** through old-growth rainforests, along ocean shores and up mountains. Local favourites, including [Goldstream Provincial Park](#), [East Sooke Regional Park](#) and the [Juan de Fuca Marine Trail](#), offer short hourly excursions to multi-day treks. As Canada's **cycling capital**, Victoria offers cycling routes along Victoria's stunningly beautiful waterfront through the historic neighbourhood of James Bay, [Beacon Hill Park](#) and [Mount Douglas Park](#). A local cycling favourite is the [Galloping Goose Trail](#) which winds through scenic farm land, past bird sanctuaries and over trestle bridges, connecting downtown Victoria to the Saanich Peninsula. One of the most peaceful ways to experience Victoria and Vancouver Island is by **kayak**. These vessels allow visitors to view the Island from a unique vantage point and venture into many places inaccessible by foot or car. Kayakers can also depart right from the Inner Harbour in downtown Victoria. Vancouver Island has approximately **3,500 km of ocean coastline, 700 lakes, 160 rivers and 890 streams** in which to paddle.



CULINARY VICTORIA

Great cuisine begins with great product, and as Southern Vancouver Island is rich in agricultural land and culinary culture, it is no surprise that the area is developing a reputation as a food lover's dream! The farms on the [Saanich Peninsula](#), located 20 minutes from downtown Victoria, have long supplied Victorians with fresh, local produce. Visitors can tour the many farms and wineries on the Saanich Peninsula, experiencing the region's abundance and "field to table" philosophy. There is a passion for local foods that deliver world-class flavours throughout the city of Victoria. This passion is represented by the [Island Chefs' Collaborative](#) (ICC), a small group of Victoria's top chefs who came together in 1999



with the purpose of promoting local and seasonal flavours to the public. From June – September, locals and visitors alike can meet Island chefs and browse baskets overflowing with the freshest Island produce, baked goods and preserves at the ICC's popular outdoor market located in the historic Bastion Square in downtown Victoria. Visitors can spend an afternoon in culinary heaven, tasting their way through the city's downtown core. The **food shops of Chinatown** offer a wide variety of food shops dedicated to Asian cuisines. Exotic fruits, vegetables, noodles galore, curried beef buns, and all sorts of sauces are just a few of the items found on Fisgard Street. **Habit Café & Culture** serves up delicious coffee, sourcing the best fair traded, organic coffees from around the world. At the historic [Rogers' Chocolates](#), a place where Charles W. (Candy) Rogers made his first chocolate in 1885, visitors will find milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate, chocolates with creamy centers, chocolate-covered ginger, espresso beans and caramel,

to name a few. Indulgence is encouraged at [The Dutch Bakery & Coffee Shop](#), a family owned establishment since 1956 and a favorite among locals. The bakery counter has a selection of handmade pastries, meat pies, sausage rolls, cakes, marzipan fruit and an assortment of fancy cookies. Pate and other fine fare can be found at [Choux Choux Charcuterie](#) a quaint yet busy store offering tastes of France. With a fine selection of sausages and other European-style cured and smoked meats, fans of Choux Choux say they make the best pate in town. [Plenty Epicurean Pantry](#) has a country feel and carries the most eclectic array of fine food products in the city. Plenty offers the city's largest selection of dried chili peppers, Cowichan Bay red Fife wheat flour, a mountain of beautifully crafted BC preserves, Vij's garam masala, local cheese, whole-wheat filo pastry and Denman Island chocolate among many other delicacies!



'SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP' IN VICTORIA

Shopping in Victoria is fabulous! Whether visitors are just window shopping or on a major shopping spree, in Victoria they can browse quaint shops, local markets and major shopping malls to find their heart's desire. Victoria offers everything from antiques to the wares of local artisans and First Nations to the designs of the hippest trendsetters. The city's layout encourages strolling and exploring the many side streets at an easy pace. Visitors shouldn't miss Canada's oldest **Chinatown** to shop for art, curios, home furnishings and Asian wares and a walk down **Fan Tan Alley**; Canada's narrowest street. Peruse the colourful heritage buildings of **LoJo** (Lower Johnson) for locally designed fashions, naturally-made products, and cosmetics to name a few. Stroll the **Design District** featuring over 25 businesses focused on design and home décor and don't forget fashionable **North Fort**, where Antique Row mingles with new fresh fashions. With so much to explore, make sure to set aside a few hours and include a lunch stop at one of Victoria's quaint cafes to sustain the shopping mode all afternoon.

THE INNER HARBOUR AND BEYOND!

The **Inner Harbour** is a bustling centre where visitors can experience Victoria's picturesque landmarks all by taking a leisurely stroll. The British Columbia Parliament Buildings stand impressively to the south end of the Harbour, The Fairmont Empress Hotel boasts her turn-of-the-century beauty and the lower causeway offers entertainment galore as buskers sing and perform! Once the sights of the Inner Harbour have been thoroughly enjoyed, visitors can venture off to find the hidden gems of the city. **James Bay** offers the best of both worlds for history buffs and savvy culinary tourists with the Emily Carr House and Royal BC Museum coupled with Sips Artisan Bistro offering artisan meats, cheeses, locally produced poultry and west coast seafood. Nestled in James Bay is **Fisherman's Wharf** where visitors can wander alongside the colourful houseboats and become acquainted with the harbour seals who regularly visit the dock. Branching off to the east of James Bay is Victoria's beloved **Beacon Hill Park**. The interior of the park has a Victorian landscape of manicured flowerbeds, graceful trees, ponds and bridged streams. Below the park lies Dallas Road and Clover Point, a favorite walking area among the locals offering spectacular views of the ocean and Olympic Mountains beyond. Bordering Beacon Hill Park is the quaint, tree-lined **Cook Street Village** where visitors will find an enclave of shops, restaurants, and colourful heritage homes. Victorians and visitors alike sit for hours sipping coffee, reading newspapers and people-watching. For visitors itching to explore even further, head just 10 minutes outside of downtown to **Funky Fernwood**, the popular culinary and arts destination, home to the Belfry Theatre, Victoria's largest contemporary theatre, Stage Wine Bar, voted #10 in *En Route* Magazine's poll of Canada's Best New Restaurants of 2008 and Lucy's in the Square offering sumptuous organic bistro fare with a Westcoast flare. Just 15 minutes from downtown on the far east of the city, and visitors will find themselves exploring a small village located within the well known area of Oak Bay known as **Estevan Village**. This neighbourhood is lined with a number of unique shops selling fresh produce, home décor, gardening essentials and children's toys and is home to Paprika Bistro, an Island Chefs Collaborative restaurant and local favourite. Shopping is unhurried and sidewalks fill with chatting friends and acquaintances.

GREEN AROUND TOWN

For visitors and residents alike, Victoria, BC has become a green destination to stay and to play. Victoria's surrounding natural beauty of enchanting old growth forests, the open Pacific Ocean and snowcapped mountains make it an easy decision for many local businesses to take important steps to preserve our environment ensuring for a greener future. It is easy to have a green vacation in Victoria as the city's mild climate makes for car-free vacations with incredibly easy access to biking, walking and running routes throughout the city. For more information visit www.green.tourismvictoria.ca



Green Accommodations

- **Sooke Harbour House:** state-of-the-art water reclamation, recycling system, a breathable grass parking lot, onsite organic gardens, support locally produced organic products, use energy efficient lighting and biodegradable products www.sookeharbourhouse.com
- **Sidney Pier Hotel & Spa:** sustainable building design, leading-edge hydrothermal technology, heat recovery systems from kitchen and laundry facilities, solar shading, low-E glass, compact fluorescent lighting www.sidneypier.com

- **Parkside Victoria Resort & Spa:** affiliated with The Registry Collection, a member of the Wyndham Worldwide Family, completely sustainable resort hotel, targeting LEED® Platinum Certification, the highest rating available www.aviawest.com
- **Inn at Laurel Point:** only BC hotel offering carbon neutral facilities, four Green Key Eco Rating by the Hotel Association of Canada, Eco-friendly room keys, Paperless check in, Composting and recycling, Ocean Wise designation www.laurelpoint.com
- **The Chateau Victoria Hotel & Suites:** Bird and Frog Friendly Certified Organic and Fairly Traded Sustainable in-room coffee service, four Green Key Eco Rating by the Hotel Association of Canada www.chateauvictoria.com
- **Cougar's Crag B&B:** donates a percentage of profits to a different environmental organization each month www.cougarscrag.com
- **Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa:** built on an existing hotel site which had fallen into disrepair, many furniture pieces contain reused wood products, double paned windows, low-flow water efficient plumbing, custom designed "bio-filtration" pond captures runoff of rainwater www.brentwoodbaylodge.com
- **The Oswego Hotel:** practices composting, herb garden, recycles all cans, bottles and paper, paperless registration with sign in pads, energy and water conservation, special lighting - LED bulbs, bicycle racks to encourage cycling www.oswegovictoria.com

Green initiatives around town

- **Dockside Green:** a 15-acre, mixed use community development, received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification with 63 points in 2008, the world's greenest building! www.docksidegreen.com
- **The Green Collective:** a group of small, locally owned and operated businesses showcasing eco-friendly, organic, socially responsible products and services with a goal of fostering a more sustainable economy www.greencollective.ca
- **LifeCycles:** an organization dedicated to cultivating awareness of environmental issues; focus in initiating action around food, health, and urban sustainability in the Greater Victoria community by working proactively to promote and create personal, shared and community gardens www.lifecyclesproject.ca
- **Harbour Air:** North America's first carbon neutral airline www.harbour-air.com
- **Royal Oak Burial Park:** first green burial site in Canada www.robp.ca
- **Arbutus Ridge Golf Course:** received the Audubon Certificate in Environmental Planning for involvement in projects that enhance wildlife habitats and preserve natural resources www.golfbc.com

VICTORIA'S UNIQUE PERSONALITIES

Victoria is full of lively and interesting characters for media to profile!

Shawn Soole, Clives Classic Lounge

Shawn fell into his career in a peculiar way. Originally trained as a landscaper, Shawn can now be found serving up cocktails at Clive's Classic Lounge located in the Chateau Victoria Hotel & Suites in downtown Victoria. Shawn's passion for mixology began after a night filling in as a server / bartender at a hotel in his home town of Brisbane, Australia. Shawn soon fell in love with the industry and started on the long path to today. He began his career in hotels but quickly made his way through pubs, nightclubs, cocktail bars and high end resorts. Some of Shawn's venues include Jorge (now Little Jumbo in Brisbane) and Hayman Island Resort (Whitsundays). Shawn's experience in various venues coupled with his passionate search for knowledge and cocktail competition experience have made him one of the most experienced bartenders in the world. Shawn's main goals are to bring mixology to the masses and to blur the borders between flair, mixology and sommeliers. After many years perfecting his craft, he's exported himself to Victoria as a writer, mixologist & sommelier. For more information www.theliquidrevolution.com

John Adams, Victoria's Ghost Expert

John Adams is one of Victoria's foremost historians and renowned story tellers. John offers a full range of exciting opportunities for you to discover the past in Victoria including his renowned Ghost tours which prove beyond a doubt that Victoria is the most haunted city in the Pacific Northwest. John began conducting public tours through Victoria's Old Town, Chinatown (the oldest in Canada!), waterfront and haunted places in 1970. Today, he heads Victoria's Annual Ghosts of Victoria Festival every October. For more information visit www.discoverthepast.com

Diane Bernard, the "Seaweed Lady"

Diane Bernard is locally known on Vancouver Island as the "Seaweed Lady". Diane's belief in sustainable community development and desire to change the "yucky" image of seaweed, led her to start Outer Coast Seaweeds in 2001. The company produces high quality seaweed products used in spas worldwide as well as eatable delicacies for use in gourmet cuisine. Diane provides area resorts, restaurants and spas including Sooke Harbour House, Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort & Spa, Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub, Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa, Tigh-na-mara Resort & Spa and Kingfisher Oceanside Resort & Spa with her hand-harvested seaweed and seaweed products. From May to September, visitors can join Diane at Whiffen Spit in Sooke, 45 minutes west of Victoria, to explore the ocean garden and experience first-hand the inner and outer benefits of seaweed – the most nutritional plant in the world. For more information visit www.sea-flora.com

Paul Hadfield, Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub

Paul Hadfield is the owner of Canada's oldest licensed Brewpub, Spinnakers Brewery. Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub and Restaurant is a favourite stop on a tour of Victoria's micro-breweries. Spinnakers Brewery features a wide range of real ales and lagers brewed right on the premises and has a history of crafting traditional and specialty beer - over 2,000 brews! Paul is an entrepreneur extraordinaire - he successfully lobbied the government to have microbreweries' products sold in liquor stores, expanded Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub and Restaurant to include Spinnakers Provisions (selling handcrafted vinegars, breads, chocolates and local cheese) and Spinnakers 1884 Heritage Guest House. Paul is also a member of the Island Chef's Collaborative (ICC) and Spinnakers features fresh, local cuisine on its menu. The ICC is a non-profit group dedicated to an ethical approach to food and a commitment to locally-grown, high quality ingredients. For more information visit www.spinnakers.com

Daniela Cubelic, Silk Road Aromatherapy & Tea Co.

In 1992, after travelling the world, Victoria native Daniela Cubelic returned home to start Silk Road Aromatherapy & Tea Company. Silk Road has since become renowned for premium quality organic tea and an all natural line of incredible skin and body care products, all made locally, and also features an award winning in-store spa. Visitors to the shop can explore tea history, culture and the exotic world of tea flavours at Silk Road's Tea Tasting Bar, the first tea tasting bar in North America! Daniela is a Tea Master who received her training with Chinese and Taiwanese Tea Masters and Herbalists. She is also an expert on the history and culture of tea, and has a passion for exploring innovative ways to enjoy tea. An avid foodie constantly cooking up new and delicious tea inspired treats, Daniela was named one of Western Canada's Top 40 Foodies under 40 by *Western Living Magazine*. For more information visit www.silkroadtea.com

Brad Horen, Aura Restaurant

Chef Brad Horen is well known in the culinary world for his roles as executive chef at Catch Seafood Restaurant (named Best New Seafood Restaurant in Canada by *enRoute Magazine*) and mentor on the Food Network's *Next Great Chef*. In 2007, Chef Horen was named Canadian Chef of the Year by the Canadian Culinary Federation and also competes internationally with the Canadian National Culinary Team. He currently executes his award winning skills as executive chef of Aura Restaurant, located in the Inn at Laurel Point in downtown Victoria. Chef Horen is a member of the Island Chef's Collaborative (ICC) and applies his philosophy of using fresh, local ingredients in his delicious creations, blending Japanese and European flavours with Vancouver Island and west coast fare. For more information visit www.aurarestaurant.ca

VICTORIA CELEBRATES!

British Columbia's capital city rolls out the welcome mat to visitors from around the world who are looking for a little getaway during Games time. A city known for its resort like atmosphere, Victoria, BC invites visitors to "calm on over" and enjoy a little "island time." The winter season in Victoria boasts reasonably priced accommodation and availability at every level from high end hotels to historic inns and bed and breakfasts. When the whistle blows and the Olympic Games commence on February 12, 2010 access by air, land and sea allows visitors to be there for those *Kodak* moments in less than an hour, in some cases. Tourism Victoria assists visitors with their getaway plans by providing an easy to read day-by-day transportation guide available on www.tourismvictoria.com/calm. The guide was created to help take the guess work out of any pending travel plans to and from the island ensuring visitors can stay connected to the Games. Direct flights to Vancouver are readily available while BC Ferries provides extended ferry transport during the duration of the Games with support from Pacific Coach Lines for those travelling on foot.

OLYMPIC SPOTTING

The Olympic spirit is evident in British Columbia's capital city and throughout Vancouver Island. Check out the below facts to see how Victoria and Vancouver Island is gearing up for the Olympics!

- Victoria was the starting point for the Olympic torch relay on October 30, 2009. The flame was ignited on the Parliament Building lawn and will have travelled over 45,000 km (27,961 miles) before arriving back in Vancouver, BC on February 12, 2010, signaling the start of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.
- 22 teams from 9 nations are using the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island as their training site in preparation for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Teams are from Canada, USA, Sweden, France, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Australia, and Russia and are using Mount Washington to train for such disciplines as snowboarding, biathlon, cross country and freestyle skiing.
- The Chinese Olympic Curling teams (men and women) are holding camps at the Archie Browning Sports Centre Feb 1-12, 2010.
- Norway's Paralympic wheelchair curling team will be training in Victoria (Juan de Fuca Curling Club) March 3-5, 2010. Practice times are 10am - 3pm (March 3 and 5) and 10am – 12pm (March 4).
- The Bay (located in the Bay Centre in downtown Victoria) carries all the popular Olympic goodies. Mascots, clothing, the ever popular red mittens, and souvenirs galore!

EVENTS IN VICTORIA DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES

February 12 – 14: livingcolours – A Spirit Spectacular

The City of Victoria and Greater Victoria Spirit Committee have teamed up to present a three day festival over set in Centennial Square is designed to coincide with the opening of the Winter Olympic Games, providing Victorians with their own opportunity to gather, celebrate and share in the spirit and excitement.

- **Friday February 12, 5:30pm-9:30pm:** Opening Celebration Spectacular
CTV Olympic coverage of the Opening Ceremonies LIVE on a 9x12 screen, featuring food vendors, a family zone, live performances, a "Spirit Lounge" beverage service, and much more.
- **Saturday February 13, 12pm-4pm:** Fun and (2010 Winter) Games
Live Music on the Spirit Stage, a Family Zone, Canadian Pavilion activities, a Fusion International community building 'mini-festival', displays, activities and community organization participation.
- **Sunday, February 14 12pm-4pm:** Chinese New Year
Interactive lively experiences in the Spirit Square to celebrate the start of the Chinese New Year: performances on the Spirit Stage, lantern making, tea-tastings, activities and community organization participation.

**More information on the livingcolours –A Spirit Spectacular festival and other community events can be found at www.victoria.ca/livingcolours*



** Photo Credit Greater Victoria Spirit Committee*