

Southern BC Rockies

Vancouver to Victoria

The Tsawwassen Ferry to Swartz Bay is the best choice for reaching Victoria quickly. The ferry ride is about two hours long and the scenery does not disappoint. If the weather is fair, there is nothing better than to stand out on deck while navigating the narrow passages between the Gulf Islands. You enter a very narrow channel with a close view of Galiano Island on the north, and Mayne Island on the south side, coming out on the south-west side of Salt Spring Island, then winding your way toward Swartz Bay. As you approach the Bay, the island on the south side of the ferry is Pender Island. The islands offer a slower pace of life. There are small farms, acreages, and summer cottages.

Arriving on the Island, make Sidney your first stop and enjoy this seaside town before finding a place to stay for the night.

Driving Distance – 69 KM

Victoria

Victoria has so many interesting activities to offer, you will have a full day fitting in just a few. Butchart Gardens, south of Swartz Bay, on Highway 17A, is world-renowned and is a restful place to wander around and enjoy the day.

Other suggestions include whale watching, a visit to Craigdarroch Castle, sailing or sea kayaking, a visit to the Royal BC Museum, a stroll along Fort Street to shop for antiques or a relaxing walk around the Inner Harbor. A visit to Beacon Hill Park is also a great way to spend some time.

Victoria to Tofino

On your way up the Trans-Canada Highway, Goldstream and Bamberton Provincial Parks are both worthwhile stops for a scenic break. Duncan, nestled in the Cowichan Valley, is also an interesting stop.

Considering the five-hour drive to Tofino, you may still find time to squeeze in an extra activity or two along the way. Part-way up the west side of the island, you will come to a town named Chemainus. This is a little seaside town with different murals painted on the sides of many downtown buildings. These murals depict the town's corporate history and community spirit.

Branching off the Trans-Canada Highway onto Highway 4A, just north of Nanaimo, you will be on your way to Port Alberni and Tofino. Stop for lunch at Coombs to see the goats that graze on the roof of a local cafe/bakery. Before reaching Port Alberni, the highway passes through MacMillan Provincial Park where you can walk among huge old-growth rain forest at Cathedral Grove, with trees up to two to three metres thick. This is a fantastic place to stop!

From Port Alberni to Tofino, the highway narrows. Traffic usually slows down somewhat through this section to accommodate the winding, mountainous roads.

Driving Distance – 316 KM

Tofino

Tofino is an incredible playground. From whale watching, kayaking tours and chartered fishing expeditions to hiking and golfing, there is an adventure for everyone. It's also known as a surfer's paradise.

The spectacular, magical island town is home to artists, incredible food and also the perfect place to relax. You may want to extend your time here to really soak in and enjoy the island vibes.

Tofino to Whistler

A return trip down the winding road to Port Alberni is the only way back to the east and more populated side of the island. You have a fairly long drive ahead of you so we suggest you start out fairly early. We recommend you make a reservation for the ferry in Nanaimo at Departure Bay to Horseshoe Bay. Or, split this journey into two days.

The drive to Whistler is beautiful, and the Sea to Sky Highway is notorious for its scenic mountainous roads. Hugging the coast all the way to the top of Howe Sound, then heading inland, the Sea to Sky Highway has several scenic viewpoints where you can stop and safely enjoy the views.

Stop at Shannon Falls Provincial Park to view the magnificent falls. Shannon Falls are the third highest in BC at 335 metres above the Sea to Sky Highway. And, just 11km (7 miles) south of Whistler, is Brandywine Falls Provincial Park. Here a spectacular 70 metre waterfall is best seen from the viewpoint which also presents some marvellous views of Daisy Lake and the surrounding mountains.

Driving Distance – 304 KM

Whistler

Whistler has lots to offer the summer visitor. Along with scenic lakes to hike around, a gondola that offers memorable views and a fantastic mountain bike park, there are four championship golf courses to choose from.

Go horseback riding in the mountains, or race down steep, jagged trails on a mountain bike. How about taking a canoe trip down the "River of Golden Dreams"? Ride an ATV to the Crystal Hut perched atop Blackcomb Mountain and enjoy a salmon bake or go white water rafting through pulsing rapids on the Upper Lillooet River.

The "Peak 2 Peak" gondola is a must-do in Whistler. The journey between Whistler and Blackcomb mountains provides a 360-degree window into the alpine environment of the two

mountains, their surrounding peaks, and changing seasons. Ride one of the glass bottom cars to get a true sense of what lies below you as well as all around you.

[Whistler to Sun Peaks](#)

Highway 99 from Whistler to Sun Peaks is not as busy as some in British Columbia, making the drive a leisurely, beautiful one. You will be driving in somewhat isolated areas, with lots of lakes, rivers, forest, and wildlife, but not too many towns or gas stations. Be sure that your gas tank is full before leaving Pemberton. The Duffy Lake Road is a beautiful, winding drive.

Sun Peaks is just northeast of Kamloops. When you arrive in Sun Peaks, you will find another challenging golf course to conquer. The spot reserved for RVs is just across the road from the entrance to the golf course. There are no hook-ups in this lot, but parking here is free of charge. Just about every day of the summer, there is a special activity scheduled. There are first-come, first-served camping amenities at the resort with picnic tables at each site and water nearby. No electrical hookup is available. Look for the sign at parking lot #4 adjacent to the Sports Centre.

Driving Distance – 360 KM

[Sun Peaks to Jasper](#)

On this leg of the journey, be prepared to see some wildlife beside the highway. The elevation gain seems moderate, but the scenery is varied and majestic. This is another route with few gas stations. There are not that many services to count on between Clearwater and Blue River and then little available until Valemont.

Mount Robson Provincial Park is a great place to take a break and stretch your legs before arriving in Jasper. You can easily walk down along the river bordering the parking lot. For the more adventurous, there are hiking trails available with more information on routes and markers available at the Provincial Park parking lot.

Driving Distance – 455 KM

[Jasper](#)

Jasper is the most northerly of towns located in the National Parks straddling the Rocky Mountains. It is less commercialized than Banff, offering a wonderful visit, especially for the outdoor enthusiast. Guides and outfitters are available to lead trips to the best fishing spots and horseback riding trails.

There are places to rent canoes and lots of venues perfect for a day hike. Sunwapta Falls are thrilling to see as the power of the water cascading down the rocky cliffs is deafening as well as humbling. As well, Maligne Canyon is a spectacular sight. For fishing and boat touring, a visit to Maligne Lake and Spirit Island is an enjoyable day out.

The Jasper SkyTram offers a terrific view of Jasper and beyond. From the top of Whistlers Mountain you can see six mountain ranges. Consider a 60km drive out to Miette Hot Springs

tonight for a relaxing soak amidst majestic mountain scenery. Wildlife on this route is virtually guaranteed - whether it be big-horn sheep, goats, elk, or bears.

Jasper to Banff

The Icefields Parkway between Jasper and Banff offers scenery and surprises. It truly is one of the most spectacular drives in Canada - allow all day to take it in. Interesting stops include Athabasca Falls, Sunwapta Falls, the Columbia Icefields, and the Kerkeslin Goat Lick.

There are several smaller National Park campgrounds dotted along the Icefields Parkway should you decide to spend more time hiking the trails along this spectacular stretch of road.

As you come around the bend in the road near Bow Summit, the highest point on the Icefields Parkway, you will see a spectacular vista. Then, as you round the turn, you begin a slow descent to the valley below. Peyto Lake is another worthy stop along the way. This lake is south of the Columbia Icefields and close to the Bow Glacier lookout.

The Icefields Parkway ends in the picturesque village of Lake Louise. Stop and explore the beauty of the emerald lakes here before travelling on to Banff.

Driving Distance - 293 KM

Banff

Banff is an inviting mountain town offering everything from art and fine dining to being home to some of the most extreme mountain sports.

Visit the Whyte Museum of the Rockies, which holds a very large collection of mountain art by a wide variety of artists who either lived in the Park or spent time working in the area.

Hike east along the Bow River to the Hoodoos (eroded rock formations by the river's edge), ride or hike up Sulphur Mountain and take the gondola down, then take a soothing dip in the Banff Hot Springs at the base of Sulphur Mountain. Or, go to the west side of town and rent a canoe and paddle northwest along the creek to the Vermillion Lakes. Enjoy.

Banff to Revelstoke

On your way to Revelstoke, you pass through two National Parks - Glacier and Yoho. While in Yoho, you will traverse the Kicking Horse Pass. Yoho National Park also has picturesque lakes and a waterfall that make for a great stop. Takakkaw Falls is just off the Trans-Canada Highway and has a vertical drop of 373 metres, giving it the honour of being one of the highest waterfalls in Canada.

Arriving in Revelstoke, this small mountain town has a beautiful and walkable downtown centre with ski and bike shops, inviting cafes and places for a delicious craft brew. Depending on the time of year you are visiting, this is an epic place to spend your time adventuring - hiking, skiing, biking, heli-tours and snowmobiling are all available to you.

Driving Distance - 287 KM

Revelstoke to Peachland

From Revelstoke, you'll be leaving the mountains and driving into the Okanagan. You'll pass through the Shuswap, past Sicamous, known for house boating in the summer. Driving through the small town of Enderby and the bigger city of Vernon, there are lots of places to stop along the way.

As you go further south from Vernon, there are expansive fruit orchards and wineries along the route to Peachland. All during the summer, there are many varieties of fruit for sale from open-air stalls along the highways. The cherries, peaches and pears have that fresh-picked flavour.

Driving Distance – 229 KM

Peachland

Peachland is nestled between two mountains - Mount Drought and Mount Coldham - and Okanagan Lake. Enjoy some time at the beach, visit a local winery (or more!) or visit The Kettle Valley Steam Railway. You can catch the train at the Canyon Creek Siding at the Trout Creek Bridge, or the Prairie Valley Station in Summerland - a town just south of Peachland. The rides generally take half a day to complete.

Peachland to Hope

Leaving Peachland for the town of Hope today, drive south on Highway 3A, where you will come to the historic town of Keremeos. It is mostly known for its orchards; fruit stands and ranching.

Turn west on Highway 3 at this point and carry on to Princeton. Here you will find a very unique museum that displays treasures and trinkets from the history of the area. Continuing on Highway 3, you will follow a gradual descent down through Manning Provincial Park. This Park is in a great location for an afternoon refreshment break.

While in the Park, you are in the shadow of the Cascade Mountains, just a few kilometres north of the border with the United States.

Making time for a few breaks along the way, this route brings you to Hope by late afternoon.

Driving Distance – 285 KM

Hope to Vancouver

You are now just a few hours from the outskirts of Vancouver - enjoy the drive and stops along the way. If you have some extra time, you could drive about an hour north of Hope and take a ride on the Hell's Gate Airtram, a gondola that takes you across a canyon at the most narrow and turbulent portion of the Fraser River's descent to the Pacific Ocean. Back on the Trans-Canada Highway, you will pass by Hope once more and continue toward Vancouver.

From the Highway, there is a turn-off that takes you into a viewing area of the Bridal Veil Falls – an extremely high and narrow ribbon of water that falls in a turbulent mist, giving the observer the impression of a bridal veil.



Fort Langley, on the south side of the Fraser River, is a Provincial Historic Site. As you drive along the Fraser River Delta, you have a choice to cross to the north of the River on your return to Vancouver. This route takes you through smaller towns and verdant countryside instead of the Trans Canada which gets busy at this point.

From the Fraser Delta and these outlying towns, you have just a short drive ahead of you, bringing you to the end of your adventure at our Vancouver Station.

Driving Distance – 180 KM