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# avenue

## THE URBAN HOW-TO GUIDE

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- How to get (and stay) healthy
- How to get a deal
- How to fake just about anything
- And more ...

# STYLE PRO

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# CURING THE HOLIDAY HEADACHE

B.C. DESTINATIONS BECKON WITH A COMBINATION OF OUTDOOR SPORTS, ARTS, SHOPPING AND LEISURE PERFECT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

**AS THE SINGLE** parent of an active and headstrong seven-year-old, I wanted a vacation that would give us a sampling of nature, history, arts and culture. One week on Vancouver Island provided all of it.

We began our adventure with a 30-minute float plane crossing from Vancouver to Victoria. The look of excitement on my son's face mirrored my own as we marvelled at the rugged, expansive view that the little plane afforded.

We spent the first three nights of our vacation at the Oak Bay Guest House, located in the most British of Victoria neighbourhoods. The Guest House is only a stone's throw from the ocean and Oak Bay Village with its antique stores, flower markets, home decor, bookstores and cafés. Hosts Rod and Heather Schneider were a wellspring of information and provided the most delectable homemade breakfasts.

On our first morning, after feeding the seals at the Oak Bay Marina, we rented a tandem bike from Sports Rent. We rode through Beacon Hill



1. The expansive sands of Parkville Beach make for a perfect playground for family fun.
2. Feeding the seals at Oak Bay Marina in Victoria is a treat for the kids and the seals.
3. With its temperate climate and renowned gardens, dining outdoors is a relaxing holiday pleasure on Vancouver Island.
4. Flying on a Harbour Air seaplane affords an incredible panoramic view of Georgia Strait and the islands.
5. Victoria's colourful Inner Harbour is a lovely place to stroll while taking in the many touristy sights and sounds.
6. Rathrevor Beach near Parkville is an ideal destination for long beach walks at low tide.

PHOTO 4 COURTESY OF HARBOUR AIR SEAPLANES. PHOTO 5 COURTESY OF TOURISM VICTORIA.

Park and along the Seaside Touring Route, stopping to drink in views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the distant mountains of Washington State's Olympic National Park, and toss a few stones into the ocean.

Later, we visited the Victoria Bug Zoo. If having a millipede crawl across your face or holding a giant walking stick insect strikes your fancy, spend a few goosebump-inducing hours here. The Bug Zoo contains Canada's largest ant farm, knowledgeable bug guides and even a gift store with chocolate-covered insects to take home as souvenirs.

Along with the Royal BC Museum and BC Experience, downtown Victoria offers many culinary and cultural adventures. A walk along Government Street with stops at Bastion Square, Rogers' Chocolates, Munro's Books and Murchie's Tea provides glimpses of a British influence that has been preserved since the construction of Victoria as a fort by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1843.

For those seeking kid-friendly accom-

modations near these attractions, the Hotel Grand Pacific, located along downtown's Inner Harbour, offers the "Unsinkable Pajama Party" — two nights in a Victoria room, a goody bag with a book, admission to the Royal British Columbia Museum *Titanic* exhibition and a choice of free in-room kids' movies or Nintendo sessions, complete with a bedtime treat of cookies and milk.

Just 20 minutes from downtown, Hatley Park National Historic Site at Royal Roads University offers families the chance to try geocaching: hunting for prizes using hand-held GPS units to pinpoint precise geographic locations in a combination of scavenger hunt, outdoor adventure and educational experience.

On day four of our adventure, we drove west to Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Provincial Park. We hiked along the trail, through the rainforest, to arrive at China Beach.

For hours, my son was mesmerized by the surf, fallen logs and of course tossing rocks into the ocean. He even opted to lose his >>

### IF YOU GO:

- Planning Your Trip:**  
 Tourism Victoria  
[tourismvictoria.com](http://tourismvictoria.com)
- Harbour Air Seaplanes:**  
 Floatplanes from Vancouver with terminals at the airport and downtown Vancouver  
[harbour-air.com](http://harbour-air.com)
- Oak Bay Guest House**  
[oakbayguesthouse.com](http://oakbayguesthouse.com)
- Hotel Grand Pacific**  
[hotelgrandpacific.com](http://hotelgrandpacific.com)
- Beach Acres Resort**  
[beachacresresort.com](http://beachacresresort.com)
- Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre**  
[quwutsun.ca](http://quwutsun.ca)
- The World Parrot Refuge**  
[worldparrotrefuge.org](http://worldparrotrefuge.org)
- The Murals at Chemainus**  
[muraltown.com](http://muraltown.com)

## WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

B.C.'S ALLURING LAKES AND HOT, SUNNY DAYS  
SET UP FOR PERFECT SUMMER GETAWAYS

### OSOYOOS

Osoyoos is another hot spot — literally — in British Columbia for a summer getaway with hot, dry summers and the warmest freshwater lakes in Canada.

Osoyoos is a Native American (Okanagan language) name, "Soo-yoos," meaning a narrow point where two lakes come together. The town has a population of 4,500 and is situated in southern B.C.'s Okanagan Valley at the junction of Highways 3 and 97. Osoyoos is about a 10-hour drive from Calgary via the Crowsnest Pass.

Osoyoos Lake is 16 kilometres long, has five varieties of fish, four public beaches and three marinas. Take in a panoramic view by driving east along Highway 3 until you reach the Anarchist Mountain Viewpoint.

Where peaches, plums and cherries grow in abundance during the summer months, so do grapes. Osoyoos bills itself as "Desert Wine Country" and there are more than 15 wineries within minutes of the town, including Burrowing Owl Estate Winery and Nk'Mip Cellars.

And what pairs better with wine than a little pampering? Just a short stroll from Nk'Mip Cellars is the new Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa, which was recently awarded a four-star rating. Spirit Ridge is one of only nine four-star resorts in B.C. and features Santé Spa, the region's first medical esthetics spa.

Make the most of the long drive to Osoyoos by varying the route home. Head north from Osoyoos on Highway 97 to Vernon and take Highway 6 to Needles and there you can cross Arrow Lakes by way of ferry. Stop in on the quaint, historic town of Nakusp and the hot springs there. Getting onto the Trans-Canada Highway at Revelstoke will take you home via Golden and Yoho National Park.

— Sandra Wiebe

### OKANAGAN

Stretching more than 100 kilometres from Penticton in the south to Vernon in the north with Kelowna smack dab in the middle, the shores and valley surrounding Lake Okanagan offer unlimited vacation adventure. With average summer highs around 28 C and more than 2,000 hours of sunshine year-round, it's one of Canada's most popular summer destinations. Accommodations range from camping (the area contains 65 provincial parks and more than 160 privately owned areas) to luxury accommodation like the Manteo Resort Waterfront Hotel and Villas or Fairmont's Lake Okanagan Resort.

A lake of this size in such a warm climate is perfect for sun-seekers — Kelowna alone has 22 beachfront parks, including City Beach Park. Penticton, located between Lake Okanagan and Skaha Lake, has popular beaches on both. From July 20 to 22, Penticton hosts the 14th Annual Beach Blanket Film Festival, which highlights Canadian films played on a full-sized screen floating 25 feet off the shores of Okanagan Lake Park.

The rugged hills surrounding the lake are perfect for hiking, biking and walking tours. The Adventure Okanagan Co-operative features the services of more than 25 tour and guide companies, offering exciting small group tours like a one-day biking trip that explores how the Kettle Valley Railway Trail area is recovering from the 2003 forest fire.

The region is also home to more than 45 golf courses, including two championship 18-hole courses at the Okanagan Golf Club — the Bear (planned by Jack Nicklaus' Golden Bear Designs) and the Quail (created by renowned golf course architect Les Furber). The area also features more than 60 wineries, many offering tours, tastings and fine dining. Vernon's Silver Star Mountain Resort hosts the Okanagan Summer Wine Festival August 9 to 11, a wine-lover's dream of activities.

— Anthony Charron

everything from an indoor pool and arcade to outdoor shuffleboard and tennis courts. The area features plenty of outdoor activities including kayaking and snorkelling with seals.

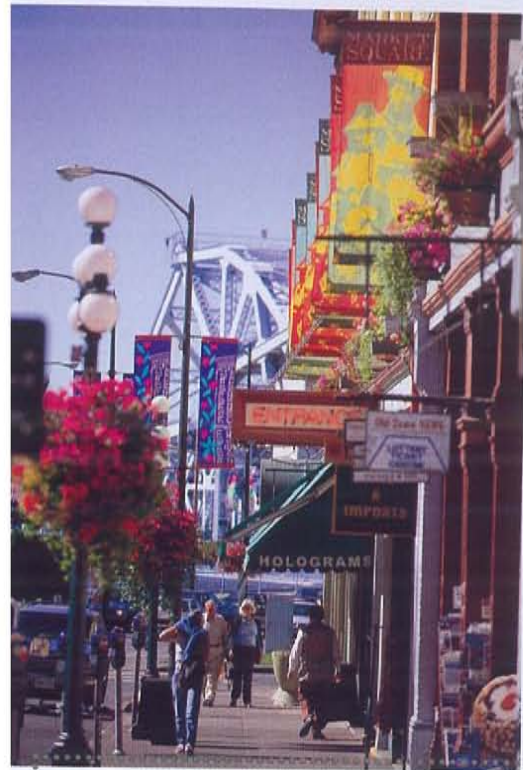
One must-see stop is the World Parrot Refuge. Operated by the For the Love of Parrots Refuge Society, the facility provides a "home for life" for previously owned pet parrots. The refuge is home to more than 500 birds and is one of the largest free-flight enclosures in the world.

On the return trip from Parksville to Victoria, our favourite destination was Chemainus. The town features 36 outdoor wall murals all over the town's buildings. What started as a downtown revitalization project

in 1982 has grown into a tourist destination attracting people from all over the world.

We spent the last day of our holiday in Victoria walking through Canada's oldest Chinatown (established in 1858) and Fan Tan Alley — the narrowest street in North America. We perused the wares of local merchants and stopped for a meal at Rebar, a local restaurant off Bastion Square offering creative vegetarian cuisine in a colourful atmosphere.

Our adventure, brimming with activities, also offered us a time for togetherness and peace. For a little while, we were able to connect with something often forgotten or overlooked in the regular pace of life. ■



The streets of downtown Victoria are abuzz in the summer with shoppers taking in all the sights and sounds.

shoes and shirt and stand under an earth ledge dripping with fresh, cold water from an earlier rainfall.

We concluded that perfect day back in Victoria with dinner at Pagliacci's, or "Pag's" as it is called locally. This small colourful restaurant feels like Little Italy meets the Bronx, and provides live jazz music, abundant portions and complimentary Shirley Temples for children.

Our next stop provided an appreciation for the aboriginal history of the area.

Driving north along the Trans-Canada Highway to Parksville, we travelled through the Cowichan Valley, Duncan and Nanaimo. The drive to Parksville takes approximately two hours, so there's plenty of time to stop along the way.

In Duncan, we took a break and visited the Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre. A walking tour of its grounds meanders through a tapestry of totem poles, each with its own story of the traditions of the Quw'utsun' people who have lived in the Cowichan Valley for hundreds of years.

In Parksville, we stayed at Beach Acres Resort, which provides front-row water, mountain and nature views with individual cabins dotting the 23 forested waterfront acres. Designed with families in mind, it has