

Photo Itinerary - Vancouver Island, Canada

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Vancouver Island is simply one of the most beautiful places on earth. Home to majestic mountains, lush temperate rainforests, and miles of breathtaking coastline, its natural beauty can be found almost anywhere you look. In addition to its scenic beauty, Vancouver Island possesses a variety of wildlife including numerous species of birds, seals, killer whales, bears, otters and a fantastic selection of butterflies. With so much to choose from, photographers visiting Vancouver Island would do well to have a plan in mind so that they get the most out of their trip.

When And Where To Go

So diverse are the opportunities for wildlife and landscape photography on Vancouver Island that it is impossible to capture everything in a single trip, or a single lifetime for that matter. I would recommend prioritizing the features that drew you to Vancouver Island before focusing on capturing these images. I would also recommend visiting during the generally dryer, warmer, and sunnier months of April through October.

The following are a few of my favorite destinations on Vancouver Island for nature photography:

Scenic

If you are looking for a great example of a lush, temperate rainforest there are few places better than Goldstream Provincial Park, located just 20 minutes from Victoria. An alternate option for those travelers who are feeling a bit more adventurous is to make the four-hour drive to the cozy town of Tofino, where miles of sandy beaches meet with towering old-growth forests. Along the way, be sure to stop at Cathedral Grove where some of the oldest and largest trees on Vancouver Island can be found.

For those in search of something a little different, I would consider visiting Botanical Beach. At low tide, this area is home to starfish, sea anemones, and a fascinating variety of inter-tidal life. A final option would be to take the ferry to one of the Gulf Islands just east of Vancouver Island.

Birds

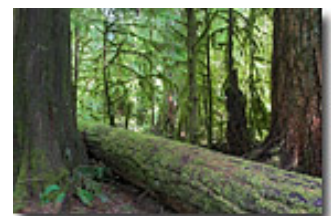
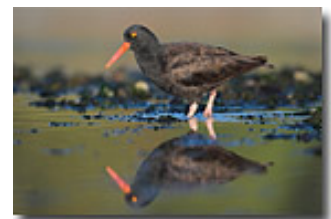
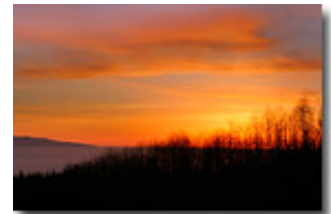
Vancouver Island is home to a vast array of bird species that can be found throughout the year. Some of my favorite birding locations within a short drive of Victoria include Clover Point, Observatory Hill, Mount Doug, Mount Tolmie, and the Esquimalt Lagoon. During the winter months, Kings Pond is highly recommended.

Other

As previously mentioned, the entire Island is beautiful. As you drive up-island, the photography locations become more remote and pristine. Parks such as Strathcona, Pacific Rim, or Cape Scott offer endless opportunities for photography and further exploration.

Another great photographic experience is to join one of the many whale-watching tours that operate out of Victoria. This area is the best in the world for viewing orcas (killer whales) and offers the opportunity to search the coastline for marine mammals as bald eagles soar gracefully overhead.

What To Bring



Aside from your camera gear, I would urge you to bring clothing designed for versatile weather conditions. The weather on southern Vancouver Island is generally pleasant during the months of April through October, but expect to see some rain during your trip. I would also bring a good pair of hiking boots as many of the most spectacular places on the island require some hiking to access.



Getting There and Getting Around

Getting to Vancouver Island is easy, but there are a couple of options to consider. The most direct route is to fly into Victoria International Airport, which is approximately 30 minutes from the city of Victoria. Another option is to fly into Vancouver and take the ferry to the Island. The ferry ride can be quite enjoyable with wonderful views of the coastline as well as the possibility of spotting whales along the way. Once on the Island, it is a good idea to head towards the city of Victoria, which offers the largest selection of accommodations and activities. Victoria is also near several of the photography hot spots mentioned above.

Final Thoughts

Ever since I moved to Vancouver Island, I can't imagine myself living anywhere else on earth. The natural beauty and opportunities for photography are truly astounding. If you ever get the chance to visit this paradise on earth, I would highly recommend it.

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Glenn Bartley is an avid nature photographer who focuses on photographing birds in their natural habitat. He currently resides in Victoria, British Columbia on Canada's west coast. To see more of Glenn's images visit his website at www.glennbartley.com.



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