Vancouver Visitor Guide – COMSEP Conference 2026

Downtown Vancouver, BC • March 25–28, 2026

1) What's happening in Vancouver during March 25–28, 2026

- **Vancouver International Auto Show —** Mar 25–29, 2026 • Vancouver Convention Centre West • Details
- **Les Misérables (Broadway Across Canada) —** Mar 25–28, 2026 (performances during conference week) • Queen Elizabeth Theatre (downtown) • Details
- **Alan Doyle: Already Dancing Tour —** Wed Mar 25, 2026 • Orpheum Theatre (downtown) • Details
- **Vancouver Canucks vs Los Angeles Kings (NHL) —** Thu Mar 26, 2026 • Rogers Arena (downtown) • Details
- **Rise Against (with Destroy Boys + Speed of Light) —** Sat Mar 28, 2026 • PNE Forum • Details
- **Dave: The Boy Who Played the Harp Tour —** Sat Mar 28, 2026 • UBC Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Centre • Details

Quick note: *Events and hours can change. Please confirm details using the official links in this guide.*

Links for event calendars:

- Destination Vancouver (official events & ideas)
- Destination Vancouver – Neighbourhood guides
- City of Vancouver – Guide to visiting Vancouver
- Vancouver Civic Theatres – What's on (Queen Elizabeth, Orpheum, etc.)
- Rogers Arena events calendar

2) Vancouver neighborhoods (where to eat/drink/shop)

Neighbourhoods are close together—great for exploring on foot, by bike, or by SkyTrain/bus.

Downtown Core (Robson St./Georgia St., Waterfront)

Central, walkable base, major hotels, shopping on Robson Street, easy access to Canada Place/Coal Harbour.

Highlights: CF Pacific Centre, Robson Street shopping, Canada Place / Waterfront Station/Seabus to North Vancouver Quay with shopping and eats

Gastown

Historic cobblestone streets, indie boutiques, galleries, and some of Vancouver's best cocktail bars.
Highlights: Steam Clock, Water Street boutiques, Gassy Jack Square

Yaletown

Stylish former warehouse district turned into patio dining, upscale restaurants, and waterfront paths along False Creek.
Highlights: Mainland St patios, Seawall access, Roundhouse Community Centre area

Chinatown

Creative food-and-drink hub with classic shops and a growing cocktail scene, adjacent to Rogers Arena/BC Place area.
Highlights: Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, Pender Street, Keefer Street bars

West End + English Bay

Tree-lined residential area with relaxed cafes, beaches, and easy access to Stanley Park.
Highlights: English Bay Beach, Davie Village, Stanley Park entrances

Granville Island
Public Market, artisan studios, theaters, and waterfront views—excellent daytime outing.
Highlights: Granville Island Public Market, Net Loft shops, Aquabus/Ferry access

Mount Pleasant / Main Street (South Main)
Craft breweries, coffee, street art, and many destination restaurants.
Highlights: Main Street boutiques, Breweries, Murals

Kitsilano
Beachy, laid-back vibe—great for yoga/shops and sunsets at Kits Beach.
Highlights: Kits Beach, West 4th Avenue shopping, Local cafés

Commercial Drive
Eclectic, multicultural eats and laid-back pubs—strong local character.
Highlights: The Drive restaurants, Vintage shops, Coffee spots

North Vancouver – Lower Lonsdale / Shipyards
Easy Seabus ride with a great waterfront district, breweries, and views back to downtown.
Highlights: Lonsdale Quay Market, Shipyards District, Brewery Row

3) Restaurant picks (by neighborhood)

Mix of iconic Vancouver spots and high-demand reservations. Many are Michelin Recommended. Suggest attendees book early for Thu–Sat nights.

Downtown Core/Waterfront/Coal Harbour

- Hawksworth Restaurant (fine dining)
- Miku (sushi / aburi)
- The Botanist (Pacific Northwest)
- Nightingale (share plates)
- Joe Fortes Seafood & Chop House (classic) ***
- Hydra Estiatorio & Wine Bar (Mediterranean)

Gastown

- L'Abattoir (contemporary French)
- Ask for Luigi (Italian)
- Pourhouse (gastropub)
- Pidgin (creative Pacific Rim)
- Kissa Tanto (Italian-Japanese)

Yaletown + False Creek

- Blue Water Cafe (seafood)
- Elisa (steakhouse)
- Cioppino's (Italian seafood – nearby)
- The Flying Pig (brasserie)
- Minami (sushi / aburi – near Yaletown)

Chinatown / Stadium District
(Canada's largest Chinatown)

- Bao Bei (Chinese-inspired)
- Phnom Penh (Cambodian/Vietnamese nearby)
- Chinatown BBQ (classic BBQ)
- Torafuku (modern Asian)

West End

- Forage (local seasonal)
- Kingyo (izakaya)
- Ramen Danbo (ramen)
- The Red Accordion (wine bar)

Mount Pleasant / Main Street

- Published on Main (tasting menu/ contemporary)
- Anh and Chi (Vietnamese)
- Savio Volpe (Italian)
- Burdock & Co (wine-focused dining)

Kitsilano

- AnnaLena (tasting menu)
- Maenam (Thai)
- Nook (pizza)
- Karma Indian Bistro (Indian)

Richmond (for serious Asian food —short trip on Skytrain Canada Line + taxi)

- Chef's Choice Chinese Cuisine (dim sum / Cantonese)
- HK BBQ Master (BBQ)
- Dinesty Dumpling House (xiao long bao)

4) Bars & speakeasies (by neighbourhood)

Gastown

- The Diamond
- Clough Club
- Guilt & Co. (live music)
- Pourhouse (cocktails + food)

Chinatown

- The Keefer Bar
- Laowai (speakeasy-style)
- Key Party (speakeasy-style)
- Bao Bei Bar

Downtown / Hotel Bars

- The Botanist Bar
- Prohibition (Rosewood Hotel Georgia)
- The Lobby Lounge (Fairmont Pacific Rim)

Yaletown

- Bartholomew
- Hello Goodbye Bar (speakeasy-style)
- Opus Bar

Mount Pleasant / Main

- The Keefer Yard (cocktail patio)
- Breweries along Main Street (brewpub hopping)

Commercial Drive

- The Charlatan
- Fets Whiskey Kitchen (nearby)
- Local pubs and craft beer spots

North Vancouver

- Brewery & Distillery Row by North Vancouver Quay

5) Easy walks & hikes starting downtown

- **Stanley Park Seawall loop (or partial loop from Coal Harbour)** — Iconic waterfront path, beaches, totem poles, and forested park interior.
- **Coal Harbour → Canada Place → Gastown** — Waterfront promenade + city sights; easy add-on for lunch/dinner in Gastown.
- **False Creek Seawall (Yaletown → Olympic Village)** — Flat, scenic path with skyline views; stop at Granville Island via bridge/ferries.
- **English Bay & Sunset Beach (West End)** — Beach walk that's especially good at sunset; connects easily to the Seawall.
- **Seabus day trip: Waterfront → Lonsdale Quay → Shipyards District** — A quick ride for views, markets, breweries, and a different vantage of downtown.

6) Getting around (transit + tips)

Vancouver is easy without a car. Most downtown trips are walkable; transit is best for neighbourhood-hopping.

- SkyTrain + buses + SeaBus are run by TransLink.
- Pay with a Compass Card, Compass Ticket, or tap a contactless credit/debit card or mobile wallet at readers/faregates.
- On SkyTrain/SeaBus, tap in and tap out. On buses, tap only when you enter.
- From YVR airport to downtown: Canada Line SkyTrain to Waterfront/City Centre stations.
- For short scenic hops across False Creek, use Aquabus/False Creek Ferries (paid separately from TransLink).

Transit links:

- TransLink – Visiting Vancouver
- TransLink – Fare zones & how to pay
- TransLink – Compass Card

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7) Easy day trips from Vancouver (downtown-friendly)

Nanaimo on Vancouver Island (downtown → downtown option. Walk-on. 75 Minutes)
https://tourismnanaimo.com/

- **Best for:** waterfront strolls, brunch/beer, quick island taste
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **Hullo foot-passenger ferry** (Downtown Vancouver ↔ Downtown Nanaimo) — book online. (Hullo Ferries)
  - **BC Ferries** (Horseshoe Bay ↔ Nanaimo Departure Bay) — vehicles must book/pay in advance on this direction. (BC Ferries)
  - **Helijet** (downtown harbour helicopter flights) — book via Helijet. (Helijet.com)
  - **Booking:**
    - Hullo: (Hullo Ferries)
    - BC Ferries: (BC Ferries)
    - Helijet: (Helijet.com)

Victoria on Vancouver Island (vehicle option or take transit bus and walk-on. 2 hours)
https://www.tourismvictoria.com/

- **Best for:** Inner Harbour, State Parliament buildings area, Butchart Garden, museums)
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **BC Ferries** (Tsawwassen ↔ Victoria/Swartz Bay) — book online. (BC Ferries)
  - **Harbour Air seaplane** (downtown harbour ↔ downtown harbour) — book online. (Harbour Air)
  - **Helijet** (downtown harbour helicopter flights) — book via Helijet. (Helijet.com)
  - **Booking:**
    - BC Ferries: (BC Ferries)
    - Harbour Air: (Harbour Air)
    - Helijet: (Helijet.com)

Salt Spring Island / Southern Gulf Islands (vehicle option or take transit bus and walk-on. 2 hours) https://www.saltspringchamber.com/Salt-Spring-Tourism/

- **Best for:** artsy village vibes, markets, tasting rooms, scenery
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **BC Ferries** (Tsawwassen ↔ Southern Gulf Islands routes) — **Book online**. (BC Ferries)

Sea-to-Sky Highway

Squamish (45 min from Vancouver) https://www.exploresquamish.com/

- **Best for:** Sea-to-Sky scenery, breweries, easy outdoor time
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **YVR Skylynx** (stops include Downtown Vancouver + Squamish on some services) — book online. (YVR Skylynx)
  - **Booking:** (YVR Skylynx)

Whistler (1.5 hours from Vancouver) https://www.whistler.com/

- **Best for:** World renowned ski resort, gondola views, village stroll, spas, lakeside walks
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **YVR Skylynx** (Downtown Vancouver ↔ Whistler) — book online. (YVR Skylynx)
  - **Whistler.com shuttle info (Epic Rides)** — book via their page. (Tourism Whistler)
  - **Whistler Shuttle** (private operator) — book online. (Whistler Shuttle)
  - **Booking:**
    - Skylynx: (YVR Skylynx)
    - Whistler.com/Epic Rides: (Tourism Whistler)
    - Whistler Shuttle: (Whistler Shuttle)

Sunshine Coast / Islands close to Vancouver

Gibsons / Sechelt (Sunshine Coast) – 1.5 hours https://gibsons.ca/community/discover-gibsons/

- **Best for:** relaxed seaside day, galleries, patios
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **BC Ferries** (Horseshoe Bay ↔ Langdale) — book online (note: some sailings may show "reservations sold out" while drive-up space may still exist). (BC Ferries)
  - **Booking:** (BC Ferries)

Bowen Island – 50 minutes https://www.tourismbowenisland.com/

- **Best for:** super easy "mini-escape," cafes, short hikes, ocean views
  How to get there:
  - **BC Ferries** (Horseshoe Bay ↔ Bowen Island/Snug Cove) — check sailings/current conditions; often treated as a simple "show up" route. (BC Ferries)
  - **Info/Planning link:** (BC Ferries)

Cross-border (passport required)

Seattle (USA) – 2.5 hours https://visitseattle.org/

- **Best for:** Pike Place area, museums, sports, waterfront
  How to get there (bookable):
  - **Amtrak Cascades** (Vancouver, BC ↔ Seattle) — ticketing + route info. (Amtrak Cascades)
  - **Booking:** (Amtrak Cascades)
  - **Bus** from Vancouver to Seattle
    - **FlixBus**
    - **Greyhound**
    - **Quick Shuttle**