



# Vancouver Island Essentials

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**Origin of the Name:** Vancouver Island was named after Royal Navy Captain George Vancouver, who surveyed the northwest coast of America between 1792 and 1794 and claimed it for the British monarch.

**Entry into Canada:** 1871 (as part of British Columbia)

**Time Zone:** Pacific Standard (GMT -8)

**Area Code:** 250

**Postal Codes:** V8K to V9Z

**System of Measurement:** Metric

**Driving Age:** 16

**Voting Age:** 18

**Legal Drinking Age:** 19

**Statutory Holidays:** New Years Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, British Columbia Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day and Christmas Day. (Easter Sunday, Easter Monday and Boxing Day are not.)

### POPULATION IN PERSPECTIVE

Vancouver Island's population of 745,165 (2007) is more than 5 times that of Prince Edward Island (population 135,851) and 1½ times that of Newfoundland (island population 479,105). Vancouver Island's population accounts for 18 percent of the total British Columbia population and 2.3 percent of Canada's. Vancouver Island's growth rate was 0.9 percent in 2007, and the projected population in 2036 is expected to reach 920,282.

Residents are concentrated along the lowlands of the southeast coast. The six largest cities are there; they account for 82 percent of the total population found on the island. Nearly half the total population lives in Greater Victoria, the 15<sup>th</sup> largest metropolitan area in Canada. Nanaimo is the 38<sup>th</sup> largest in Canada. The population is increasing steadily in the southeast quarter — less rapidly than in the 90s — while many resource-based communities are losing population.

*Source: Statistics Canada.*

### POPULATION DENSITY (PEOPLE/KM<sup>2</sup>)

**Vancouver Island: 22.4**

British Columbia: 4.4

Canada: 3.5

Prince Edward Island: 23.9

Toronto: 3,939.4

New York City: 10,194.2

## Take 5 BARBARA MCLINTOCK'S THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT VANCOUVER ISLAND

Barbara McLintock is a coroner with the BC Coroner Service. She is also an author and retired journalist. She lives in Victoria.

1. People are welcome to take wedding pictures on the Legislature lawns, but there's a time limit of 1 1/2 hours, because the grounds can get crowded.
2. The chapel at St. Ann's Academy was deconsecrated in 1973. Once a month there is a traditional Catholic mass in Latin.
3. Saanich is the only place in North America where you can find Eurasian skylarks, the descendants of birds imported from England at the turn of the 20th century.
4. Spode, the famous English china works, made a set of china especially for the Butchart Gardens in 1937, with a floral motif, of course.
5. The Hudson's Bay Company named Beacon Hill in Beacon Hill Park. They kept two beacons burning at night so that shipmen could triangulate their position relative to Brotchie Ledge.

### ON A TYPICAL DAY ON VANCOUVER ISLAND . . .

- 16 babies are born
- 19 people die
- 11 weddings occur
- 5 couples divorce

### POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

Median age: 43.8 years

Median age of men: 42; of women: 44

BC's median age: 40.2 years

### Did you know...

that when an Islander says they are going "Up Island," they are going to any part of the island that is north of Victoria?

## They Said It

*"A great many canoes filled with the Natives were about the ships all day, and a trade commenced betwixt us and them, which was carried on with the Strictest honesty on both sides. Their articles were the Skins of various animals, such as Bears, Wolves, Foxes, Dear, Rackoons, Polecats, Martins and in particular the Sea Beaver, the same as is found on the coast of Kamtchatka."*

– Captain James Cook's journal entry for March 30, 1778, during his third voyage exploring the Pacific Ocean, recording the first transactions for sea otter pelts with First Nations people of Vancouver Island.

## LIFE AND DEATH

Life Expectancy: 81.1 years (2007)

Fertility Rate: 1,336 lifetime births per 1,000 women

Sex ratio: 956 males for every 1000 females

Source: BC Statistics.

## MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

- Vancouver Island's population aged 15 and over: 552,590
- Percentage of those who are married: 50
- Percentage who are single, never married: 29
- Percentage who are divorced: 10
- Percentage who are widowed: 7
- Percentage who are separated: 4
- Marriage rate (per 1,000 population) in BC: 5.3
- Marriage rate in Prince Edward Island, the highest: 6.0
- Marriage rate in Quebec, the lowest: 2.8
- Canada's marriage rate: 4.7
- Rate of divorce (per 100 marriages) in BC: 44.7
- Divorce rate in Quebec, the highest: 49.7
- Divorce rate in Prince Edward Island, the lowest: 27.3
- Canada's divorce rate: 38.3

Sources: BC Statistics and Statistics Canada.

## Take 5 VANCOUVER ISLAND'S LARGEST CITIES 2007 (POPULATION)

1. **Victoria** 350,240
2. **Nanaimo** 97,977
3. **Courtenay** 53,389
4. **Duncan** 43,954
5. **Campbell River** 38,390

Source: BC Statistics.

## FAMILY STRUCTURE

- Total families on Vancouver Island: 190,430
- Married couples: 71.5 percent
- Female single parent: 13.0 percent
- Common-law couples: 12.5 percent
- Male single parent: 3.0 percent
- Families with children: 54.0 percent
- Families without children: 46.0 percent

## Did you know...

that Vancouver Island accounts for 17.3 percent of all migration in British Columbia?

## Take 5 TOP FIVE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION)

1. **Protestant** 40.7
2. **No religion** 38.8
3. **Roman Catholic** 14.4
4. **Sikh** 1.0
5. **Buddhist** 0.9

Source: BC Statistics.

## YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM

- You consider anything less than 5°C freezing.
- You consider anything above 25°C way too hot.
- You start wearing shorts in January.
- You notice your lifestyle has become unaffordable.
- You take a Graval before driving to Tofino.
- Your wedding invitation specifies potluck.
- You know Douglas fir from hemlock, balsam or spruce. By smell.
- You have no trouble pronouncing Ucluelet, Sooke, Tahsis, and Zeballos.
- You have no concept of humidity without precipitation.
- You've actually used your mountain bike on a mountain.
- You know that squirrels are just rats with fluffy tails, even though tourists think they're cute.
- You carry sunglasses and an umbrella at all times.
- If you really wanted to, you could snowboard, sail, golf, and bike all in the same day.
- You know the provincial flower is the dogwood.
- You're confused as to why Saskatchewan and Manitoba are part of Western Canada.
- You know more people who own boats than air conditioners.
- You think Atlantic salmon doesn't deserve the name salmon when compared to Pacific salmon.
- You consider a week with no rain to be "great weather."
- You have no problems drinking your tap water.
- You leave the island to see the rest of Canada, and you realize that there is nothing better to see.
- You have been lost in the woods on several occasions; you know you will be again; and you're okay with that.
- You've heard about "the big one" and you just couldn't care less.
- You know how scary it is to drive next to a loaded logging truck.

## VANCOUVER ISLAND WHEN . . .

- You can recite the BC Ferries safety announcement by heart.
- You know that a "1.5 hour ferry" really means 3 hours. Time to get to the ferry, wait for the ferry, get on the ferry, eat in the buffet on the ferry, and then wait for the broken down VW in front of you to get off the ferry.
- You recognize April 20th as a good reason to celebrate.
- "The Bay Centre" just sounds wrong.
- Your life was dramatically impacted by the four feet of snow that fell during the Blizzard of '96.
- You remember Uforia and the Cheesecake Factory with a sense of nostalgia.
- A stroll through Mayfair Mall turns into an informal high school reunion.
- Your parka gets worn exactly one time a year — on your annual trek to the mountains.
- You have never spent money on curl enhancers for your hair.
- The peaches you had for breakfast are super fresh; you picked them from the tree on your front lawn.
- Your 3-bedroom, single bath bungalow is worth as much as a mansion just about anywhere else in Canada.
- You drank green tea long before it became trendy.
- Your commute involves a ferry ride.
- Your home has a recycling room.
- You carry baggies for picking up dog poo.
- You swim in the harbour on New Year's Day.
- You'd rather do it yourself.
- Your clothes all have SPF ratings.
- Conversation with another islander generates at least three points of view.
- You laugh out loud when you hear the words, 'fast ferries.'

## Did you know...

that Victoria ranked second (behind Ottawa) of 154 cities in the best places to live in the country?

### ABORIGINAL MINORITIES ORIGINS (PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION)

- Vancouver Island's total Aboriginal: 6.6
- Multiple origins: 3.9
- First Nations: 2.5
- Métis: 0.2
- Inuit: 0.02

### VISIBLE MINORITIES ORIGINS (PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION)

- Chinese: 2.2
- South Asian: 1.5
- Southeast Asian: 0.5
- Black: 0.5
- Japanese: 0.4
- Filipino: 0.4
- Latin American: 0.3
- Korean: 0.2
- Multiple origins: 0.1
- West Asian: 0.08
- Arab: 0.05

Source: BC Statistics.

## Did you know...

that Victoria is one of the few places in North America where double-decker buses are used in the regular public transit system?

## Take 5 PATRICK DUNAE'S ESSENTIAL READS ABOUT VANCOUVER ISLAND

Patrick Dunae was born and educated in Victoria. He teaches history at Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo and the University of Victoria and is editor of the Vancouver Island digital archive viHistory.ca.

1. **Clive Phillipps-Wolley, *One of the Broken Brigade* (1897).** The hero of this cautionary tale is an English remittance man who is fleeced by American real-estate sharks, settles in a cabin on Shawnigan Lake and is (eventually) reunited with his sweetheart.

2. **S. W. Jackman, *Vancouver Island* (1972).** A Victoria history professor and prolific author wrote this engaging account of the island's history, geography, flora and fauna for readers in the Old Country. It's now a tad quaint — "The trip from Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen takes one hour and forty minutes and is reasonable: \$5.00 (£2) per automobile and \$2.00 (80p) per passenger."

3. **Charles Lillard, *Seven Shillings a Year* (1986).** A refreshingly non-academic history of Vancouver Island, with a great narrative line, by a shirt-sleeves poet and historian.

4. **Marilyn Bowering, *To All Appearances a Lady* (1989).** In the 1950s, a retired marine pilot circumnavigates Vancouver Island with the ghost of an elderly Chinese woman, who recalls 1890s labour unrest, anti-Chinese sentiment and the plight of lepers. Haunting and evocative, with extraordinary historical detail.

5. **Arthur Mayse, *My Father, My Friend* (1993).** A well-known outdoor columnist penned this pastoral memoir of growing up in Nanaimo after World War I. It's *A River Runs Through It* in an Island setting.

## Did you know...

that Fan Tan Alley in Victoria's Chinatown is the narrowest street in North America? It was once home to several opium dens.

## LANGUAGE

Of the total population, residents whose mother tongue is:

English	88.1 percent
French	1.6 percent
Non-official languages	9.6 percent

## Did you know...

that Canada's defining "49th parallel" (49° N latitude) runs through the town of Ladysmith?

English and French	0.2 percent
English and a non-official language	0.4 percent
French and a non-official language	0.02 percent
English, French and a non-official language	0.02 percent
Neither English nor French	0.4 percent

## The Best of BC

The Encyclopedia of British Columbia's website lists "100 Best Things About BC." Among them are these Vancouver Island notables:

- **#3 Emily Carr's paintings:** born and raised in Victoria, Carr was inspired by nature and First Nations culture. A few works are in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.
- **#12 Bruce Hutchison's journalism:** A political columnist and editor-in-chief of both the *Victoria Daily Times* and *Vancouver Sun*, Hutchison's many books won three Governor General's Awards, and he was awarded the Order of Canada.
- **#15 Della Falls:** a gem of Strathcona Provincial Park, it is one of Canada's tallest waterfalls, cascading down 440 metres.
- **#20 Gulf Islands:** the sheltered waterways and charming coastlines of more than 200 islands and islets in Georgia Strait, off Vancouver Island's southeast coast.
- **#21 Nanaimo bars:** a type of chocolate no-bake square that is rumoured to have originated in the Vancouver Island town of the same name in the 1950s.

- **#25 Butchart Gardens:** 20 hectares of floral finery on the Saanich Inlet estate of local cement magnate Robert Butchart and his wife Jenny, who created the Sunken Garden from an exhausted limestone quarry."
- **#34 Robson Bight:** a small bay on Vancouver Island's northeast coast where orca whales congregate to use the unique rubbing beach, which is protected in a BC ecological reserve.
- **#36 Whaler's Shrine:** Near the First Nations village of Yuquot (Friendly Cove), on Nootka Island, was a shrine where Mowachaht whalers went to cleanse and pray in preparation; since 1905, stored at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.
- **#43 Carmanah Giant:** the tallest measured Sitka spruce tree in the world, towers 95 m tall; approximately 400 years old. The entire Carmanah Valley, on the island's west coast, is protected as a provincial park.
- **#49 MV *Lady Rose*:** a heritage Coaster, last of the Union Steamship line, built in the late 1930s and still serving the Alberni Inlet and Barkley Sound, carrying cargo, mail and passengers.

Source: *Encyclopedia of British Columbia*.

## HEALTH CARE

Number of physicians by census metropolitan area or census agglomeration, 2007:

	gp's/family doctors	specialists	total
Victoria	567	477	1,044
Nanaimo	121	104	225
Courtenay	88	49	137

Duncan	61	39	100
Campbell River	54	24	78
Parksville	34	10	44
Port Alberni	25	12	37

Source: CMA.

## Higher Education

### University of Victoria (Victoria)

Public, degree-granting; established 1963.

Programs: Undergraduate and graduate programs in 10 faculties and 2 divisions.

Student enrollment: 19,500

### Royal Roads University (Colwood)

Public, degree-granting; established 1995.

Programs: Undergraduate and graduate programs; certificate and diploma programs.

Student enrollment: 4,400

### Vancouver Island University (Nanaimo)

Public, degree-granting; established 1969.

Programs: Graduate and undergraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates; English Language program.

Student enrollment: 11,000

### Camosun College (Victoria)

Public; established 1971.

Programs: Credit, vocational, and continuing education programs.

Student enrollment: 15,400

### North Island College (Campbell River, Comox Valley, Port Alberni, Port Hardy)

Public; established 1975.

Programs: Associate and Baccalaureate degrees.

Student enrollment: 3,700

## Web links

### BC Statistics

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

They crunch the numbers. Vast arrays of statistics, many pertinent to Vancouver Island, many free.

### VancouverIsland.com

[www.vancouverisland.com](http://www.vancouverisland.com)

The first stop when you need information on Vancouver Island; everything from local town maps to job searches to the best places to eat.

### Tourism Vancouver Island

[www.vancouverisland.travel](http://www.vancouverisland.travel)

Guides for visitors that are user-friendly for residents as well.

## Take 5 VANCOUVER ISLAND'S FASTEST GROWING MUNICIPALITIES

Population in 2007 (with percentage growth over 2006)

1. **Langford 24,817** (+5.8)
2. **Courtenay 23,911** (+4.4)
3. **Cumberland 3,018** (+4.1)
4. **Ladysmith 8,144** (+3.3)
5. **Sooke 10,504** (+3.3)

Source: BC Statistics.