

Out and About in Nanaimo, BC

by Tamara Muldoon

The lively, small city of Nanaimo, B.C., with its exceptional recreational opportunities plus abundant visitor services, makes an attractive destination for a day trip or vacation. Located on Vancouver Island's eastern shore, it is less than two hours by ferry from Vancouver, B.C., only a 90-minute drive from Victoria or a short flight on Kenmore Air from Seattle.

Sheltered by barrier islands, Nanaimo's vast harbor begs to be explored by boat. Alberni Outpost at the Nanaimo Adventure Centre, adjacent to the Departure Bay ferry terminal, stands ready with all the necessary gear for a paddle excursion, including kayak, canoe and stand-up paddleboard rentals as well as guided tours. The harbor's calm waters provide a stimulating yet relatively safe environment for novice boaters; while experienced kayakers will thrill to the challenging waters of Departure Bay and Georgia Strait.

For land-lubbers, Nanaimo offers 130 km. of hiking and cycling trails. The city's designated bicycle paths include the Waterfront Trail and more ambitious E&L and Parkway trails. Newcastle Island—a Provincial Park accessed by ferry from downtown—is crisscrossed by 15 km. of trails with eye-catching vistas. Above the city, Mount Benson's forested slopes conceal world-class mountain biking routes. Bring

your own ride, or rent equipment at Hub City Cycles.

A highly walkable city, Nanaimo's harborfront and many parks offer peaceful and scenic paths for strolling. At Jack Point/Biggs Park, a 2.5 km. trail follows the shoreline of a narrow spit bordering the Nanaimo River estuary where water and time have shaped fantastic rock formations.

Start your day with espresso and fresh-baked pastries at Mon Petit Choux. Feeling hollow by mid-day? The menu at Modern Café includes comfort foods like Mom's Mac & Cheese. But, after a day of exertion, treat yourself to an unforgettable dinner at Bistro at Westwood Lake, where you will find French-style cuisine skillfully prepared with seasonal Pacific Northwest ingredients and a remarkable wine list. The Bistro is surprisingly affordable considering the exceptional food, inventive presentation and gracious service.

There is so much to experience here; you will undoubtedly want to stay longer. The conveniently-located Travelodge offers clean, affordable lodgings with deluxe continental breakfast. Or, try the Kennedy House B&B near downtown and the Old City Quarter.

Whether you paddle, pedal or perambulate, you will love doing it in Nanaimo. 🚣



When You Go:

Tourism Nanaimo, tourismnanaimo.com

Kenmore Air, kenmoreair.com

B.C. Ferries, bcferries.com

Alberni Outpost, albernioutpost.com

Hub City Cycles, hubcitycycles.ca

Mon Petit Choux, monpetitchoux.ca

Modern Café, thomoderncafe.ca

Bistro at Westwood Lake, westwoodlake.com

Travelodge Nanaimo, travelodgenanaimo.com

Kennedy House B&B, kennedyhouse.ca

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