



ON FOOT

Vancouver Beyond the Games

Olympic fever aside, take to the streets to get an insider's view of this winning city. By GUY SADDY

When visitors to Vancouver arrive for the 2010 Winter Olympics February 12-28, they'll encounter a place that's difficult to pin down. Canada's third largest city has long been defined by its stunning natural setting, but it also possesses one of the most densely populated downtown cores in North America. Vancouver has made room for a steadily increasing population by erasing swaths of its working-class, lumber-town history, replacing it with towering

“small footprint” high-rise condos set amid carefully planned parks. This walking tour travels from past to present—and, if the buzz holds true, to the future. (Unless indicated, area code is 604.)

Start at Harbour Centre and take the glass elevator 430 feet to **1 Vancouver Lookout** (555 W. Hastings St.; 689-0421), where a circular observation deck allows for panoramic views of the downtown core, Pacific Ocean, and the sometimes visible Coast Mountains north of the city. After getting your bearings, head down cobbled Water Street into Gastown, Vancouver's birthplace. Despite the many well-preserved, late-19th-century buildings, Gastown was for years largely dismissed by locals as the place tourists went to buy cheap trinkets and eat bland pasta. Lately, however, it has emerged as one of Vancouver's most vibrant areas.

Browse the many fashion and housewares boutiques along Water, Abbott, Alexander, and Powell Streets, including **2 Inform Interiors** (50 Water St.; 682-3868). Inform's owner, Niels Bendtsen, designs clean-lined pieces like the understated Canyon sofa.

The **3 Irish Heather GastroPub** (210 Carrall St.; 688-9779) serves up Gaelic comfort food like bangers and mash and homemade pot pies, washed down with a pint of Smithwicks. Or try the Best of BC plate (a mix of three locally produced cured meats and artisanal cheeses) at **4 Salt Tasting Room** (45 Blood Alley; 633-1912),

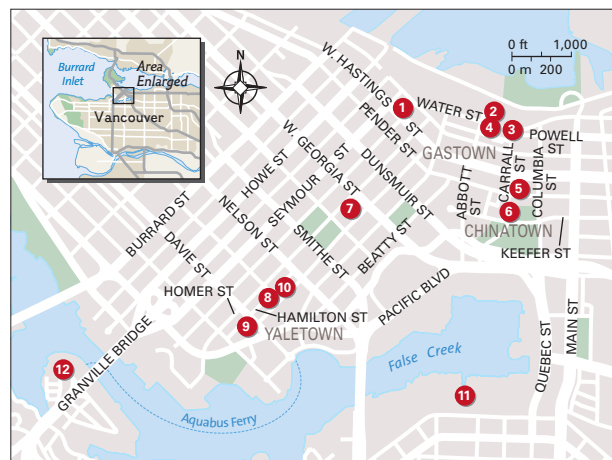


Vancouver gold: the Colosseum-like Public Library and tasty eats in Chinatown (left).

a tiny charcuterie and wine bar marked by a black flag featuring a salt shaker.

Walk south—away from the mountains—on Carrall Street, cutting through downtown Eastside. (The area isn't particularly dangerous, this being Canada, but use common sense, especially at night.) Continue until you reach Pender Street, the main artery in Chinatown, the continent's second largest. Here, vendors sell everything from steamed pork buns to dried abalone, used in soups, for up to \$700 a pound. On weekends during the summer, this area becomes a lively open-air night market.

Take an impromptu crash course in making “Gong-Fu Cha,” a style of tea, at **5 The Chinese Tea Shop** (101 E. Pender St.; 633-1322). Proprietor Daniel Lui starts by arranging a tiny teapot, cups, tongs, and a strainer on a porous bamboo mat. After seasoning the pot and warming the cups (among other steps), the tea is finally ready to be slurped—not sipped. Walk down Columbia Street and make a right onto Carrall to **6 Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden** (578 Carrall St.; 662-3207). Step inside and encounter a masterpiece of natural stone, water



SUSAN SEIBERT (UPPER LEFT), TIMOTHY HULSELEY/SUPERSTOCK (UPPER RIGHT), INTERNATIONAL MAPPING

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features, and classic Chinese architecture: sweeping roofs set off by wooden columns and moon gates.

The well-used **7 Vancouver Public Library Central Branch** (350 W. Georgia St.; 331-3603), designed by noted architect Moshe Safdie, presents art exhibits in the library's bottom-floor Moat Gallery.



Hip Gastown shop Salmagundi West.

(1111 Mainland St.; 681-2739) draws crowds for its made-on-premises lagers, ales, and stout.

9 Opus Hotel's lobby bar mixes Bellinis (350 Davie St.; 642-0557). Gallery-café **10 Raw Canvas** (1046 Hamilton St.; 687-1729) encourages guests in its back-of-the-room "painting pit" to buy a canvas and indulge their inner Miró.

Turn left on Davie Street until you reach the seawall. Directly across False Creek inlet is the LEED-certified **11 Olympic Village** (closed to the public during the Games). But continue straight ahead to the Aquabus pier for a ten-minute boat ride to Granville Island. You could easily spend a day wandering the **12 Granville Island Public Market** (1689 Johnston St.; 327-7407), where savvy Vancouverites scout out wild-boar prosciutto or beer-and-treacle-cured salami from **Oyama Sausage Company**. Nearby find craft shops like handmade stationery store **Paper-Ya** (1666 Johnston St.; 684-2531), the **Emily Carr University of Art + Design** (1399 Johnston St. #9; 844-3809), and a working cement factory that serves as a reminder of the time before Vancouver's reinvention, when the city still had calluses on its palms. For some visitors, however, it'll be enough to simply stop and ponder Vancouver from the Yaletown seawall. Along one stretch, short, poetic inscriptions are etched into adjacent glass walls. One reads: "Roughness of this place, not even a memory now."

Not quite. Not yet.