

## Vancouver coastal seaport

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### Vancouver: In with the New




KATHERINE BRODSKY, JUNE 2018

In Vancouver, wilderness adventure, stunning vistas and urban attractions all intersect in the same playground. The laid-back vibe, beaches, parks, seascapes and hiking trails provide the perfect backdrop for a rapidly expanding food scene, nightlife and shopping.

The past few years have seen plenty of new arrivals to Vancouver, most notably **Parq Vancouver**, a \$640 million project built next to the B.C. Place Stadium. Check into one of its two hotels—the Douglas, an Autograph Collection Hotel, and the JW Marriott—before exploring the rest of the decadent amenities. You can roll the dice at the glitzy casino, take refuge in a 30,000-square-foot rooftop park, unwind at the state-of-the-art spa and burn some calories at the fitness studio.

And when it comes to calories, Parq is also helping to cement Vancouver's growing reputation as a town for serious foodies, with eight restaurants and lounges. **The Victor**, located on the sixth floor overlooking False Creek and Parq's rooftop urban park, has been earning raves for its upscale, contemporary atmosphere, delicious steak and seafood menu and, naturally, its views.

Another culinary newcomer is the Fairmont Pacific Rim's **Botanist** restaurant, which replaces the more minimalistic prior tenant, Oru. What remains is Joseph Wu's origami light fixture, which sprawls across the ceiling of a glass-walled enclave filled with lush greenery and more than 50 types of plant species, including edible ones such as green tea camellia and cardamom. Here, chef Hector Laguna (formerly of Hawksworth) serves artful creations with nuanced flavors and textures, while the alchemists at the **Botanist Bar and Cocktail Lab** brew some sophisticated, whimsical delights.

In the mood for Italian? After shuttering short-lived Joe Pizza, the team behind Ask for Luigi, Pourhouse and St. Lawrence has recently reimagined the space as **Di Beppe Restaurant**, with a café on one side and restaurant on the other, serving up Italian fare and aperitivo culture. For a French twist, the bistro **St. Lawrence** injects a Québécois influence into its rustic and inventive menu.

In Yaletown, **Fayuca** serves elevated Mexican food with dishes such as albacore ceviche and oxtail fideo pasta, while in Kitsilano, **Mak N Ming**'s unusual Japanese-French fusion has been attracting guests with its seasonal set menus. The best restaurant in the city for vegetarians is **The Acorn**, but for a more casual feel, newcomer sister restaurant **The Arbor** is a great spot to grab some comfort food such as poutine-hand-cut potatoes with mushroom gravy and Quebec cheese curds—or pulled-BBQ jackfruit steamed buns.

Vancouver was, until recently, sadly devoid of decent coffee shops. Then **Caffe Artigiano** came along, ushering in a renaissance of hipster cafés that take their java beans seriously. **Prado Café**'s proprietor, Sammy Piccolo, is a four-time Canadian barista champion and four-time finalist at the World Barista Championship. And he's done it again, launching **Spade Coffee** on Commercial Drive. A café by day, with small treats and Italian pastries, it transforms into a full restaurant by night. Meanwhile, **Aperture Coffee Bar**, a cozy, homey café featuring jazz, a book collection and a photography theme, has expanded to its second location in Riley Park.

Once you're properly fueled for shopping, Japanese clothing retailer **UNIQLO** has recently opened several stores across metro Vancouver, while Canadian cult-status beauty brand **DECIEM** has opened its first Vancouver store downtown, with a clean, industrial aesthetic. In Gastown, H&M's upscale minimalist brand **COS** has recently moved into the neighborhood, offering staples for both women and men.

As Vancouver continues to grow, there's no doubt that the city is seeing a boom in sophisticated new offerings. Luckily, for visitors and residents, that means more exciting options reflective of Vancouver's multicultural landscape and adventurous spirit—whether outdoors or in.

### Where to Hike

The well-marked **Mount Seymour Trail** in North Shore's Mount Seymour Provincial Park offers several different peaks, each with its own breathtaking views of Vancouver, the Indian Arm fjord and coastal mountains. For an easier, shorter hike, try **Dog Mountain**. Rooty and rocky, the trail is moderately challenging in a fun way, and the views are worth sweating for.

### Where to Spa

The recently opened **NIC Spa** offers services such as facials, body wraps, massages, waxing, pedicures, electrotherapy treatments and more—starting at just \$20. It's simple and affordable, employing advanced-level students from New Image College, which specializes in training for film and television makeup artistry and esthetics.

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