

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP ▶ On a bear hunt – with a camera

With a little luck you will be able to see some of the resident black bears up close from the boat (photo above) in the bays around *Tofino*. In the summer the bear mothers here teach their cubs how to crack mussels → p. 44

INSIDER TIP ▶ Starfish ahoy!

Seemingly weightless floating jellyfish, colourful sea anemones, giant octopus, starfish, wolf eels and many other marine animals live in the *Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre* north of Victoria – but only for a while, then they are returned to the sea → p. 49

INSIDER TIP ▶ Picture-perfect town

The historic trading post of *Fort Langley*, on the Fraser River, has often been the backdrop for Hollywood movies – with a little luck you might cross paths with a star who is filming a movie there → p. 39

INSIDER TIP ▶ Visit the culinary world of Asia

Strange spices, durian fruit, live crabs and duck feet: the *T&T Supermarket* on the edge of Chinatown in Vancouver offers all the gourmet treasures of Asia → p. 35

INSIDER TIP ▶ A river full of salmon

In early October the *Adams River*, north-east of Kamloops, swarms with hundreds of thousands of bright red salmon → p. 56

INSIDER TIP ▶ Log cabins on the lake

Thick beams, red roofs and breathtaking vistas: the *Clearwater Lake Lodge* off Hwy. 20 meets all the requirements for a wilderness adventure → p. 53

INSIDER TIP ▶ Hot springs in the wilderness

Pure relaxation after a long walk: soak sore muscles in the *Nakusp Hot Springs* pools, wonderfully secluded in the woods → p. 61

INSIDER TIP ▶ Crazy Canadians

A race with decorated toilets on wheels? The *Klondike International Outhouse Race* proves that nothing is too crazy for the gold miners in Dawson City → p. 127

INSIDER TIP ▶ Good wine, beautiful view

Quail's Gate Estate Winery on the shore of Okanagan Lake in the wine area of Kelowna offers the perfect gourmet lunch → p. 58

INSIDER TIP ▶ Canoe trip just like the early pioneers

A multi-day canoe trip on the lakes of the *Wells Gray Provincial Park* opens the eyes and the heart – and also gives you calluses on your hands! → p. 63

INSIDER TIP ▶ Original cowboy boots

Here you will certainly be spoiled for choice; the *Alberta Boot Company* in Calgary has 12,000 boots in stock – or you can order a custom pair → p. 86

INSIDER TIP ▶ A night in a house of pleasure

Bombay Peggy's in Dawson City (photo below) really was once a brothel – today it is a B & B with a good pub → p. 96

INSIDER TIP ▶ A hike with scenic views

In good weather *Parker Ridge* has the most beautiful views of the Rockies and the mighty glaciers which flow into the three lakes from here → p. 105

INSIDER TIP ▶ Rustic pioneer lodge

You will feel as if you have been transported back to the Wild West in the *Num-Ti-Jah Lodge* in Banff National Park → p. 70

INSIDER TIP ▶ Adventurous spelunking

Be an intrepid cave explorer: you will find the caverns and crystal formations of the *Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park* on Vancouver Island still in their original state → p. 124



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Salmon viewing in Vancouver*

Instead of going to an aquarium, you can see wild salmon up close and for free at the *Capilano Salmon Hatchery* in the summer. Watch the fish fight against the flow through large underwater observation windows → p. 34

● *Gold rush town*

Historic *Dawson City* could almost be a museum village, but the authentic gold rush town established in 1898 is alive and kicking and offers wonderful photo opportunities and plenty of pioneer flair (photo) without any entrance fee → p. 95

● *Sunny mountains, dizzying heights*

National parks charge admission but provincial parks in Alberta, such as *Kananaskis Country*, are free. The Rocky Mountains here are just as beautiful as in Banff – but much sunnier, because it is the eastern flank of the mountains → p. 77

● *The sound of the mountains*

Enjoy jazz, classical music, dance and even operas – for free or only little money – throughout the summer at the prestigious *Banff Centre*. All in front of the magnificent mountain scenery of Banff Nation → p. 89

● *Enjoyment of art for free*

'Art for all' is the motto of the *Vancouver Art Gallery* every Tuesday evening, when admission is free. Those who want to can leave a donation. Worth seeing: Emily Carr's impressionistic and expansive paintings of the rugged west coast → p. 38

● *Cliff hiking*

Landscaped and paved trails are few and far between on the west coast – and they usually cost money such as in the Pacific Rim National Park. The *Wild Pacific Trail* right next door in Ucluelet is free and truly stunning. Start with the Lighthouse Loop section! → p. 44

●●● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of...' tips

ONLY IN WESTERN CANADA

Unique experiences

● *Celebrate with lumberjacks*

It doesn't get more Canadian than the *Salmon Festival* in Campbell River on Vancouver Island where salmon and lumberjacks are celebrated – with axe throwing and bowsaw competitions → p. 127

● *Across the Arctic Circle*

The trip on Canada's northernmost road takes two days: the 700 km/435 mi *Dempster Highway* runs through the wilderness from Dawson City across the Arctic Circle through the Mackenzie Delta → p. 97

● *Orca watching*

It is a strict rule that no one is allowed to get closer than 100 m/300 ft from the whales. But the inquisitive creatures often come closer to the boats and you may experience this on a whale watching tour in Victoria with *Eagle Wing Tours* → p. 48

● *Smoked salmon in Vancouver*

At the Granville Island *Public Market* in Vancouver you can sample the culinary treasures of Canada's west coast: raspberries, goat's cheese, oysters, halibut – and the best smoked salmon in the world → p. 35

● *Trapper for a day*

How about spending the night as a fur trapper? Deep in the wilderness of British Columbia the wooden stockades and beaver pelts of the *Fort St. James National Historic Site* take you back to the era of the fur trader → p. 64

● *Cycling around Stanley Park*

On a sunny afternoon, there is no better outing in Vancouver than the more than 10 km/6 mi long *Stanley Park Drive*. The route winds its way along the coast with great views of the city, the mountains, the fjords and small beaches → p. 36

● *Lake views in the Rocky Mountains*

The view from *Bow Summit Pass* – 2000 m/6560 ft and sometimes windy – over Peyto Lake is quite stunning. The strikingly turquoise glacial lake is one of the most impressive sights in the Rockies (photo) → p. 69



ONLY IN

DISCOVERY TOURS



Each corner of this world has its own beauty. If you wish to discover the unique characteristics of this area, if you look for great tips on worthwhile stops, stunning locations, selected restaurants or typical activities – these customized adventure tours are just the thing for you. Get started and follow the path of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

An introductory tour, ideal for first-timers: the route from the prairies in Calgary to the ice-covered peaks of the Rockies, on to the lake districts of British Columbia and the Pacific coast in Vancouver, show the many facets of Western Canada. There is ample time for hiking and experiencing nature along the route and other tours are easy to combine. Best travel time: June to September.

A day to get settled in **1 Calgary** → p. 83: stroll in **Stephen Avenue Mall**, visit **Heritage Park** and shop cheap, as there is no provincial tax in Alberta. Benefit from the great bargains for clothes and shoes the next morning. Right at the

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WESTERN CANADA AT A GLANCE



START: **1** Calgary
END: **19** Vancouver

14 days
Driving time
35 hours

Distance:
→ 2500 km/1553 mi

COSTS: C\$300 for gas (car), C\$40 canoe rental at **11 Emerald Lake** in Yoho National Park, C\$150 rafting tour at **16 Lytton**, C\$37 ride with **18 Sea-to-Sky Gondola** in Squamish

WHAT TO PACK: Hiking boots, rain/wind jacket and sweater, do not forget sun protection and mosquito repellent in summer

IMPORTANT TIPS: Bears are frequently seen especially in early summer – keep distance and leave no food around! Tip: You sometimes can save the car transfer fee if you follow the route in west-east direction.



DAY 1

1 Calgary

