

FAMILY TRAVEL

VICTORIA VISIT SERVES UP MULTI-GENERATION FUN

MHAIRRI WOODHALL

The grandparent-child relationship is unique and incredibly special. Living in a province away from my in-laws has been difficult during the pandemic, even with a backyard social distancing visit last summer. So, over spring break, we did our best to make up for all that was lost by vacationing together in Victoria to celebrate Grandpa's 80th birthday, although the man looks and acts at least a decade — or two — younger.

Victoria is a cultural wonderland with a temperate coastal climate that allows for year-round outdoor exploration and fun-filled activities sure to please the kids, parents and grandparents. After three days of seeing the sights — on and off the water — the City of Gardens has earned our family's vote for a top urban playground in Canada. From bugs, boats and baby goats to princess teas and horse-drawn carriage rides, Victoria's adventures are infinite.

ROYAL BC MUSEUM

The Royal BC Museum, one of Victoria's most beloved attractions, is undergoing a colossal modernization project, resulting in a temporary closure of the Human History gallery. While it was disappointing to miss the towering poles in Totem Hall and cobblestone streets of turn-of-the-century Victoria, my 10-year old daughter Brooklyn and her grandpa made the most of the museum's mammoth experience. We spent about 90 minutes touring the eerily lifelike displays showcasing B.C.'s coastal forests, seashores and Fraser River Delta, and the show-stopping Ice Age exhibit's towering woolly beast.

IF YOU GO..

Spring arrives early in Victoria, so it's our favourite time to visit. Also, crowds are much smaller, and the weather is usually a comfortable temperature — we were blessed with warm sunshine for most of our trip. In the inner harbour, the Fairmont Empress is where we typically stay for its indoor pool and ideal location for exploring the city on foot. Check Fairmont.com for special room savings, like Kids Rule the Castle, which includes daily breakfast for the family in Q, an Empress scavenger hunt, a Winston the Empress Dog stuffy and dining deals for the children. Or, for AAA/CAA members, receive rates of up to 15 per cent off and a \$50 dining credit.

Luckily for us, the Royal BC Museum has adjusted its pricing to account for the closure. At just \$5 per person, it's a super affordable outing to enjoy with grandparents and extended family.

VICTORIA BUG ZOO

Upon entering the Victoria Bug Zoo, I tiptoed up to the first exhibit of elegant stick insects camouflaged by foliage, determined to quash my fears. Unfortunately, sighting a neighbouring tarantula was simply too



Brooklyn and Maggie getting ready for Tally-Ho's enjoyable horse-drawn carriage tour through downtown Victoria. CURT WOODHALL

much for my acute arachnophobia to handle. Thus, I sat at the entrance while my family gawked over the creepy-crawly residents. It's no surprise that kids love this place. The staff are highly knowledgeable and passionate about the zoo's 40-plus species of insects, including everything from tropical bugs and praying mantises to glow-in-the-dark scorpions. Adventurous visitors can even hold some of the friendlier creatures — more power to them.

PRINCESS TEA

After school, tea time with my parents has become a treasured tradition for Brooklyn. Embracing her love for afternoon tea, we booked Tea at the Empress, a time-honoured ritual for 114 years. The glamorous Princess Tea experience includes a tiara (or prince's crown for boys), a pot of fruit-infused herbal tea and a tiered tray of temptations.

While we enjoyed the traditional menu, Brooklyn indulged in a pint-sized picnic featuring organic peanut butter and jelly

finger sandwiches, a flaky mini raisin scone with clotted cream and house-made strawberry jam, and a decadent array of desserts.

HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDE

Building on our royal tea afternoon, we surprised Brooklyn and her grandparents with a horse-drawn carriage ride through downtown Victoria. We met our guide, and sweet-natured workhorse Maggie, across the street from the Parliament Buildings. After introductions, we quickly set off, Maggie ever-eager for her day's final tour. Over about 45 minutes, we clipped and clopped along Victoria's blooming tree-lined streets, marvelling at the beautifully restored heritage homes and equally exquisite gardens. The tour loops through Beacon Hill Park, one of the city's crown jewels, past the petting zoo's peacocks and baby goats, then alongside Dallas Road's sweeping waterfront scenes on the way back.

VICTORIA HARBOUR FERRY TOUR

Another family-friendly, all-ages adventure is the Victoria Harbour Ferry's 45-minute tour that departs from the Empress Dock. The guiding narrative includes fascinating facts about the area's history and landmark sights. Dress warmly and pack activities for the kids to ensure all parties are aptly entertained.

While my in-laws, husband and I listened intently to wild stories about the Parliament Buildings' notorious architect, Brooklyn watched for inner harbour wildlife, including otters and harbour seals. The tour also allows guests to hop off at Fisherman's Wharf, a hidden gem famous for its ice cream and fish and chips shops.

DINING FOR ALL

Mealtime is magic with grandparents, and Victoria's inner harbour serves up excellent options to please every palate. Our favourites for dinner include Nautical Nellies, the city's seafood-steak house staple and 10 Acres Commons for its seasonal farm-to-plate dishes.

Top brunch choices are Benedicts and pancakes at Q in the Fairmont Empress and Don Mee's dim sum delights, followed by milk tea from The Bubble Tea Place in Chinatown. Curt and I also enjoyed an impromptu date night at Boom and Batten on the waterfront. It was phenomenal, and while Brooklyn would have happily dined on mussels, octopus, and chargrilled steak, she had much more fun swimming with her grandparents in the Fairmont indoor pool.

For more destination information, visit www.arrivalstravel.com



Tired of your MUFFIN Top?

We can't deny it, but with age, many of us are constantly "battling the bulge," as the pounds add on. Luckily, nature contains some ingredients, that can help us burn off the excess calories we so desperately try to get rid of.*

Spices like chili and ingredients like EGCG (from green tea leaves) are among the most popular and well-studied compounds used. They have shown significant results in helping reduce body weight by supporting calorie burning of the body's own fat deposits.* Minerals like chromium have also shown to help your weight, through metabolizing fats and carbohydrates. The combination of these ingredients can help one's weight loss journey.

TEST YOURSELF	YES	NO
I'm tired of my muffin top	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't exercise sufficiently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't drink green tea or use spices in my food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm looking for a natural health supplement to help me lose weight	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you answered "yes" to most of these questions, then Chili Burn is for you.

Chili Burn™ is the best-selling diet product from New Nordic, and contains naturally sourced chili and green tea, as well as the mineral chromium.

TESTIMONIAL



I LOST 40 POUNDS WITH CHILI BURN

"A year ago, I came across a story about a woman, who had started taking a natural health product called Chili Burn and she lost 60 pounds over 12 months. I was really inspired by her story and how fit she looked. I have been taking Chili Burn now for 7 months and I'm thrilled with how I look and feel slimmer. My clothes are all too big now. I have lost around 40 pounds without following a strict diet or exercise plan, and the nice thing is that the weight came off slowly but surely, month after month. I strongly recommend Chili Burn to anyone who is trying to lose some weight in a sound way."*

- Judy H., Alberta, Canada

DID YOU KNOW?

Spices and EGCG from green tea can help:

- Burn off more body fat, especially around the stomach
- Reduce your appetite, so you eat less
- Promote energy production, so you move more
- Burn more calories even while resting and sleeping



*To be used in a program of reduced calorie intake of dietary calories and increased physical exercise (if possible) to help in weight management. This product may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label.



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