

# Vancouver, British Columbia: A Disney Cruise Line Port Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

For many years, the Disney Cruise Line operated out of its home port of Port Canaveral on the east coast of Florida, but recently, they've spread their wings, adding a number of home ports across America, and Europe, with some cruises now sailing from the Caribbean as well.

For those planning to set sail from some of these glamorous destinations, what can you expect from your home port of call, if you arrive a day or two early for your cruise, or stay behind once it's over? Let's start with Vancouver, home port for the Alaskan cruise sailings.

The Vancouver cruise terminal is literally right at the heart of the city, located at Canada Place in the middle of the Waterfront. Above it is the beautiful Pan Pacific Hotel, which is where we stayed prior to our cruise. It couldn't be more convenient. On the day you cruise, all you need to do is take the elevator down to the terminal beneath the hotel, and board your ship. Call bell services, and they'll take your luggage, and deliver it to the ship, which we were really impressed with.

☐ Just a few minutes' walk away from the cruise terminal, there's plenty to see. Head one way along the waterfront, and you can find the stunning Olympic cauldron from the Winter Olympics of 2010, and next to it the digital orca statue of one of the beautiful world's most beautiful creatures.

☐ Head the other way along the Vancouver Waterfront, and you're quickly in Gastown. Named after a saloon opened by "Gassy Jack" Deighton, you can still see a statue of the man himself. Walk through the center of Gastown, along Water Street, which is packed with wonderful souvenir shops, many boasting the T-shirts with funny slogans that Canada is famed for, and you'll also find the unique steam clock. One of the world's only steam clocks, it chimes on the hour, and it's a fascinating thing to see. All of our group was mesmerized by it.

Want to get a good look at Vancouver from above? Then the Harbour Centre is the place to head for. It's home to the Vancouver Lookout, a viewing deck 550 feet above the city, which offers superb views. Not only does it help to give you a good perspective of Vancouver, but what I loved the most was looking out across Vancouver Harbour at the seaplanes landing, and taking off. Until this vacation, this was something I'd never seen before, so I was fascinated by this.

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□ Although there's a lot to see near the cruise terminal itself, to do Vancouver justice, you'll need to cover a lot of ground. We opted for a hop-on, hop-off bus service, which had different routes all around the city, rather than trying to navigate through Vancouver in a rental car. One of the places not to be missed is Stanley Park, which covers 1,000 acres. As you leave, and then return to Vancouver on your cruise, you'll pass this park, and underneath the Lions Gate Bridge, which connects West and North Vancouver to downtown. From Prospect Point nearby, you have a lovely view of the bridge, and of the surrounding park, and water.

□ We also enjoyed the Totem Park here, and a walk along the seawall, although take it from me, this park is bigger than you might think from a map! It felt like we walked for hours from the Totem Park to Prospect Point, and we probably did in fairness... Another attraction that's worth seeing in Stanley Park is the Rose Garden, although when we visited in late August, it was getting to the end of the season. Earlier in the year, I can imagine that it's a riot of colour and scent.

□ Another place well worth exploring is Granville Island. As the name suggests, it is an island, although it is connected to the mainland on one side. The big attraction here is the Public Market, packed with colourful fruit and vegetables. If you want fresh (and relatively cheap) produce for lunch, this is the place to come. It's an overwhelming sight when you first walk in, with top quality food on offer everywhere you look.

□ We literally only had a day or so to spend in Vancouver, but there's plenty more to see if you can spare more time. We saw a fair few sights from the hop-on, hop-off bus that would be worth a visit, like Science World, originally built for Expo '86, and the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, which showcases the sporting history of British Columbia.

□ Head outside Vancouver, and there's much more to see. Friends of ours took a day trip out to Grouse Mountain, where you can take the Skyride gondola to the peak for stunning views, and see the World's Greatest Lumberjack Show, and the Capilano Suspension Bridge, which is definitely not something for the faint hearted. Having heard their descriptions of their day, they're both places I'd like to get to.

□ I was disappointed we couldn't work in a trip to Victoria on our last trip, with its beautiful harbourfront, the Royal BC Museum, telling the history of the province, and the famous Butchart Gardens, on which the beautiful gardens of Canada in Epcot are based on. Next time, that's on the must-do list, as is Whistler. About an hour and a half from Vancouver, this city co-hosted the 2010 Winter Olympics, and the guidebook photos I've seen show a stunning place, dominated by the

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mountains behind, but with some spectacular buildings, including the Fairmont Chateau Whistler.

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□The plan is to try and spend at least three days in the Vancouver area the next time we take an Alaskan cruise to try and do all of these things. If I had my time again, and thought I'd only ever take the one Alaskan cruise, I'd probably plan for four or five days in the Vancouver area to see and do everything, although even in a day or so, you can see a fair bit of what is a beautiful and vibrant city.

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□In the next of this series of articles, we'll look at Miami, the second home port of call for the Disney Cruise Line in Florida.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

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