

no more rainchecks

Deck to go here and to take up about this much room. Deck to go here and to take up about this much room. Deck to go here and to take up about this much room. Deck to go here and to take up about this much room.

story by
**CLAIRE
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“I kept thinking to myself, is all the rain keeping people inside, or am I just a loser?” Hannah Woodley* says with a laugh. Her big smile indicates she’s mostly kidding, but it’s clear she’s given this question some serious thought. At 23 years old, Woodley left her tiny BC hometown in the Comox Valley to venture to the big city, seeking job opportunities and a new life. Vancouver, so she thought, was the land of opportunity. “I wanted to meet a new group of friends, eat and drink at cool places, and maybe go on a few dates,” she says.

However, like many other twenty-somethings who move to Vancouver, Woodley found it extremely difficult to make new friends in the city. In a 2012 survey for the Vancouver Foundation, Sentsis Market Research reported, “54 percent of people believe Vancouver is becoming a resort town for the wealthy.” Its findings showed that 70 percent hadn’t visited a neighbour’s home or invited a neighbour over. And 47 percent didn’t trust or know if their neighbours trust each other.”

For Woodley, the hustle and bustle of Vancouver was exciting, but she started to yearn for the social aspects of the small town life she was used to. Finding a job in marketing was

easy for the newcomer, but she didn’t stick with it. There was no one her age at her office, so she quit and found a serving job—not easy an decision for her, as she felt like she was giving up on an opportunity to start a career, and her parents were far from supportive.

But she stands by all of her choices. The job change opened up a new social world that was crucial for her mental state and overall hap-

piness—and after four months of living in the city, she made her first good friend serving at a restaurant.

The current housing market may be another factor in the social obstacles in Vancouver. In one of the most expensive markets in the country, young people in the country find it challenging to become homeowners; so they live in small apartments, making it difficult to

host large groups of people or throw parties. As Naomi Powell explains in her 2018 piece, “Millennial housing crisis? Turns out, it’s real and worse than you thought,” in the *Financial Post*, “Canadian millennials are shouldering a particularly heavy burden by historical standards, analysts say, one brought on by dizzying price increases, but also lagging incomes and tighter regulations”

Woodley has travelled extensively, and feels Vancouver is missing the friendly banter and social curiosity she has experienced elsewhere. “I have been backpacking all over Europe and Australia, I would go to a bar there every night by myself and instantly meet people. Here, everyone is already part of a friend group so they ignore you,” she says. “Everyone at the bar downtown is usually from the suburbs, they

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Get Out There

Having a hard time making friends in Vancouver? No fear. Woodley has given us her best advice on meeting new people, and making lasting friendships in the rainy city.

JOIN A TEAM, CLASS OR CLUB.

Woodley joined a women's soccer team her first summer in Vancouver, and it completely changed the friend game for her. Even taking a single fitness class can introduce you to people who you may not have met otherwise. Come early, stay late, and always offer to carpool!

SERVE OR BARTEND

Whether you work full time or study, it's possible to squeeze in a side hustle. Picking up a shift once or twice a week at a restaurant or bar can expose you to a lot of people, often young adults; who have similar schedules and interests to you. Customers that come in are also often chatty and can offer up social connections or the inside scoop on the city.

ATTEND NETWORKING EVENTS

With experience and an interest in marketing, Woodley attended a handful of networking events soon after she arrived in the city. "I was looking for a job, but ended up meeting a lot of other people in my industry and closer to my age since they were also there to learn," she says. Eventbrite and Facebook are two great sources to search for local networking events.

BECOME A REGULAR (AND SIT AT THE BAR)

When you move to a new city, you might be inclined to explore all of the different businesses and local hangout spots. However, Woodley advocates for recurrent visits to coffee shops, gyms or restaurants that you like. The staff get to know you better, and who knows, there might be another regular there who is also seeking company. If you're going to dinner, sit at the bar instead of a table, it's much more casual and social.



come with their friends who they have known from high school, even since kindergarten. It's intimidating to try and break into a wolf pack like that."

She believes a big reason for her struggle was that she came to the city in her late twenties and she didn't attend university in Vancouver. In particular, being a single adult female in particular brought its own pitfalls. Woodley often found that when she tried to socialize with men in a friend group, their girlfriends would get the wrong idea.

Despite Woodley's hardships when she

moved here in 2017, she stuck it out in Vancouver and now has a plethora of friends, a shared two-bedroom apartment with a roommate and a blooming dating life. She admitted that she had to exit out of her comfort zone to make new friendships happen, whether it's saying hello to a stranger walking by, starting a conversation in an elevator, or complementing the juice bar barista's outfit. "I was really depressed for awhile," she shares, "it took me a long time to realize that there was nothing wrong with me, it was just hard to meet people in Vancouver. Once I pushed myself, things got a lot better." ■

Maybe you're looking for something more than friendship?

Tired of the Vancouver bar scene? Here are some alternative date ideas. **BY RACHEL WILSON**

TAKE A COOKING CLASS!

A class at Nourish offers unique recipes with an expert's guide. *Nourish Cooking School, 2245 West Broadway*

CARE TO BOWL?

This date gives you physical space that you might prefer over the close quarters of a dinner date

Commodore Lanes 838 Granville Street

FEELING GREEN?

Clean up a local beach! Spanish Banks has an incredible stretch of sand for this date idea.

TIPS:

Always let your friends know where you're going, and who with. Never feel

too confident with who you're meeting, but always have an open mind.

