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The Top Things to Do During Vancouver's Cherry Blossom Season

From festival events and walking tours to cherry sushi and cycling, here's how to make the most of the pink blooms this April.

MARCH 14, 2018 - BY <u>DAVID LANDERS</u> (HTTPS://WWW.WESTJETMAGAZINE.COM/BIO/DAVID-LANDERS)

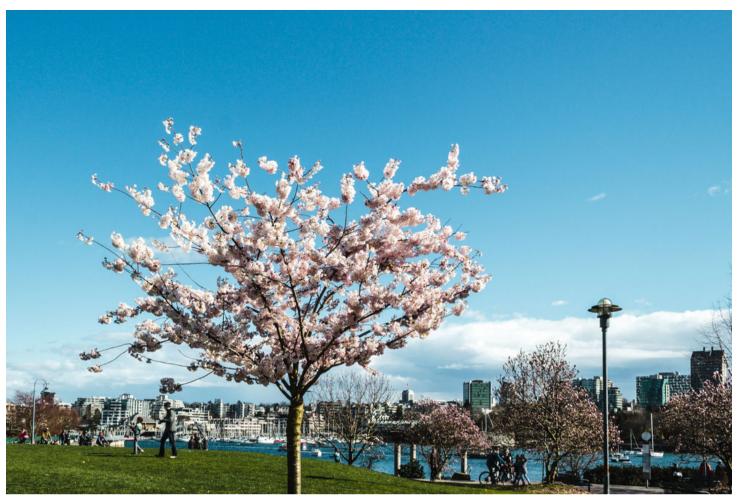


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Ever since Vancouver received 500 cherry trees from Japan in the 1930s, the appearance of *sakura* (the Japanese word meaning cherry tree blossoms) signals the arrival of spring. This year, approximately 40,000 cherry trees will dot the city with petals in all hues of pink, and though a few blossoms teased Vancouver early, the trees are expected to peak in April. Once the blooming begins, celebrate Vancouver's most colorful season in these six ways.

Check out the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (http://www.vcbf.ca/)

From April 3 to 29, the annual <u>Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (http://www.vcbf.ca/)</u> offers a bouquet of cultural, artistic and educational programs that are family-friendly and often free. On April 5, catch the <u>Cherry Jam Downtown Concert (http://www.vcbf.ca/community-event/cherry-jam-downtown-concert)</u>, a lunchtime musical performance at the Burrard Skytrain. Another festival favourite is <u>Tree Talks & Walks (http://www.vcbf.ca/community-event/tree-talks-walks)</u>, a series of guided walking tours led by local cultural leaders or horticulture experts. On April 8 (check the website as this date could change), join Egan Davis, BC Landscape and Nursery Association's 2016 Educator of the Year, at Oppenheimer Park where cherry trees were planted 40 years ago in honour of the first generation of Japanese settlers in Canada.

2. Walk around

Create a personalized walking tour with the <u>Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival's regularly</u> <u>updated map (http://maps.vcbf.ca/map/)</u> that details locations, varieties, and blooming dates of cherry trees. Spots that don't disappoint are Graveley Street in Renfrew (along one city block

from Lillooet Street to Windermere Street) and Stanley Park (near the rose garden, along paths to the Japanese War Memorial and around the eastern edge of the Lost Lagoon). Or, head to tranquil Nitobe Memorial Garden (http://botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/visit/nitobe-memorial-garden/) on the University of British Columbia campus to see blossoms in a traditional Japanese tea garden.

3. Celebrate Japanese culture at Sakura Days Japan Fair

(http://www.japanfairvancouver.com/)

Amidst the cherry trees at the <u>VanDusen Botanical Gardens (http://vandusengarden.org/)</u>, Japanese culture is the focus of the <u>Sakura Days Japan Fair (http://www.japanfairvancouver.com/)</u> on April 14 and 15. Fair-goers enjoy traditional tea ceremonies, *ikebana* (flower arrangements) demonstrations, haiku readings, and more while sipping sake and nibbling Japanese foods under the *sakura*.

4. Taste the blossoms at Tojo's (http://tojos.com/Home.html)

Sample cherry blossom cuisine by visiting <u>Tojo's (http://tojos.com/Home.html)</u> where Vancouver sushi legend Chef Hidekazu Tojo will create three menu items featuring cherry blossoms (the blossoms themselves, the leaves and as a blossom sauce). Like the blooms, the dishes are available for a limited time after March 11 through the end of April.

5. Have a picnic in a park

For thousands of years, Japanese friends and families practiced the custom of *hanami*, gathering under blooming cherry trees with food and drinks. Continue that tradition at prime picnic spots in Queen Elizabeth Park and Stanley Park. Better yet, pick up spring-fresh foods at <u>Granville Island Public Market (https://granvilleisland.com/public-market)</u> for a *hanami* at nearby Sutcliffe Park.

6. Cycle around the city

See more blossoms by renting a bike or using Mobi (https://www.mobibikes.ca/), Vancouver's bike-share program. In East Van, the casual Bike the Blossoms (http://www.vcbf.ca/community-event/bike-the-blossoms) (currently scheduled for April 28) starts and ends on the south side of John Hendry Park, close to Trout Lake. For a westside tour, start from Granville Island on the bike path along False Creek. Head west and watch for blooms at Fishermen's Wharf, Vanier Park, and Kitsilano Beach Park.

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