

Spotlight: Victoria, B.C.

Canada's finest and fittest city is a scenic and supreme running destination — Part One

When James Douglas established the Hudson's Bay Company trading post Fort Victoria back in 1843, he probably had no idea that his Vancouver Island outpost would evolve into one of North America's most charming cities. But how could it not? With its mild climate (the most agreeable in all of Canada) and its maritime setting complete with a backdrop of golden hills, emerald ridges and snow-capped mountains, Victoria has had a hard time keeping scads of people from moving to and visiting it each year. In a recent *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine survey, Victoria, was judged to be one of the world's finest cities. And according to the Canadian government (Statistics Canada), Victoria is rated as the country's most fit city as well. And how can it not be with its Mediterranean climate, easy access to the outdoors, and incredible array of parks, greenbelts and trails?

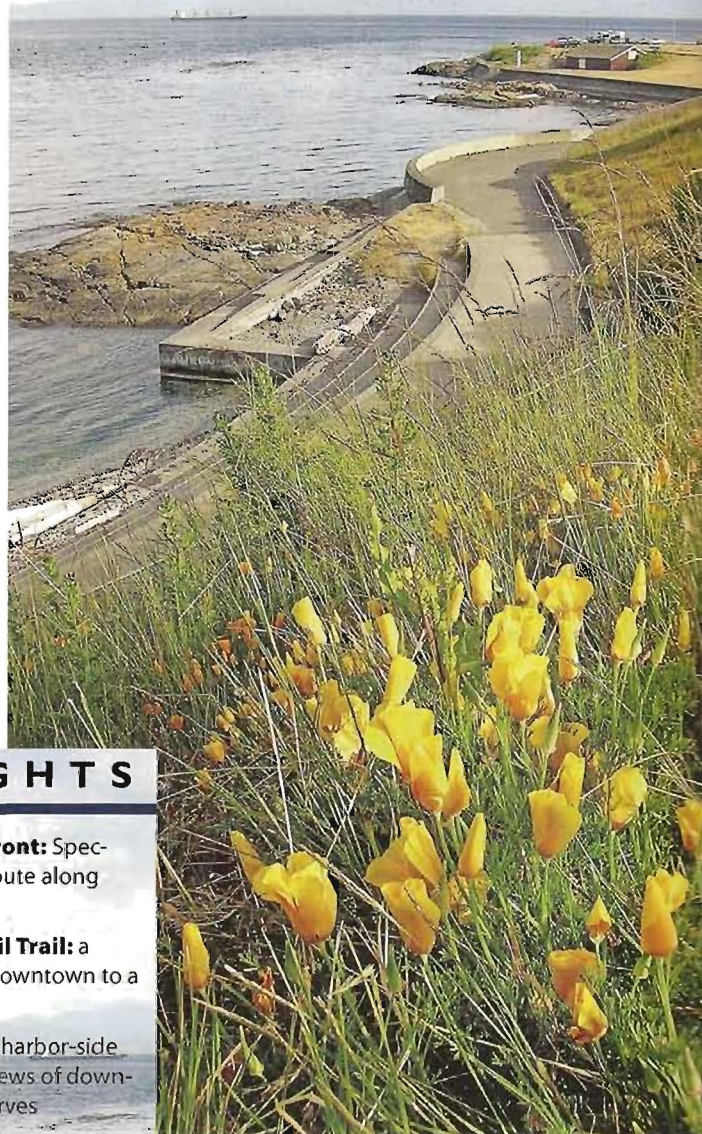
In Victoria, runners are ubiquitous, running events are numerous and top-notch, and many of Canada's top ranked runners call Victoria home. If you haven't visited this Northwest city yet on the run, it's time you planned an upcoming trip. The easiest way to get to Victoria is via a B.C. ferry from the Tssawassen terminal. You'll have many daily departures to choose from and you can make advanced reservations. You can also take a Washington State ferry from Anacortes, although the regular sailings are few. The Blackball Ferry line makes several daily departures from Port Angeles, and you can walk on to the Victoria Clipper from downtown Seattle if you are not taking a car. And you won't need a car if you are staying downtown, because you'll be able to roll right out of your hotel room onto some great running paths and routes.

Where to start? How about right from the historic and charming downtown

located on Victoria's busy Inner Harbour? Teeming with seaplanes, pleasure craft, passenger ferries and kayaks, the scenic harbor is abuzz with life. But trying to run along the quays and walkways ringing it can be quite challenging with the throngs of tourists, street performers and downtown and government workers that often clog them. Best bet: early morning and definitely before a cruise ship arrives.

If you prefer running later in the day, skip the Inner Harbour and head for the Outer Harbour, then onward along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. I rank this route, predominantly along Dallas Road, among the most spectacularly scenic and visually stimulating in the Northwest.

Just steps away from a bustling downtown, the beautiful running path at Clover Point along the Strait of Juan de Fuca.



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dallas Road Waterfront:** Spectacular scenic running route along seawall and coastal cliffs
- **Galloping Goose Rail Trail:** a 55-kilometer trail from downtown to a ghost town
- **Westsong Pathway:** harbor-side trail offering stunning views of downtown buildings and wharves

