



STANLEY PARK – VANCOUVER’S URBAN OASIS

Stanley Park is the largest city park in Canada (404 hectares - 1,000 acres). Described by one local writer as a 'thousand-acre therapeutic couch', it began as a military reserve in the mid-1800s to guard the entrance to Vancouver harbour. The Vancouver Parks Board supervises it - and just about every resident in the city has an opinion if anybody has plans to make any changes other than cutting the grass. Much of Stanley Park's design was based on the planning principles of Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer behind New York's Central Park.

How long?

1 – 4 hours

How do I get there?

- **Walking:** Stanley Park is located in the West End of downtown Vancouver. If you're walking from downtown, have your hotel concierge point you in the direction of Robson Street. Head west on Robson until you come to Denman Street. Turn left (south) on Denman and walk until you reach English Bay beach and you will see the seawall that winds along the shore. Follow the seawall towards the right (west) and you will enter Stanley Park.
- **Bike/rollerblade:** If you're interested in biking or rollerblading in and around Stanley Park you will need to go to Spokes Bicycle Rentals on Denman Street (see above for walking instructions or take a taxi) – 1798 West Georgia Street (at Denman). From there, the staff at Spokes will point you in the right direction for travelling around the seawall.
- **Vancouver Trolley:** Use your Vancouver Trolley Pass to get into Stanley Park – ask your hotel concierge for the nearest trolley stop. The trolley will give you a guided commentary along the way. Get off at stop 14, 15 or 16 in Stanley Park depending on your interests. You can hop back on the trolley to head home at any of these stops as well.
- **Taxi:** A taxi ride from downtown Vancouver to the entrance of Stanley Park (at the Rowing Club) is only a five-minute ride (approximately \$6 CAD). The Yellow Cab phone number is 604.681.1111.

***Please note:** Stanley Park maps are available at the **Brockton Visitor Centre** by the totem poles.

Stanley Park Seawall

The Stanley Park seawall was originally conceived as a precaution to erosion in the early 1920s. Though it took nearly six decades to complete the entire

seawall, which rings the peninsula of Stanley Park, it was obviously well worth it as visitors and residents alike make this outdoor recreational facility the most popular activity in Vancouver. Its circular route racks up 5.5 miles or 8.85 km. Along the seawall are several points of interest:

- **Deadman's Island and HMCS Discovery Naval Reserve** – This small five-acre island is a military base, annexed by the federal government in 1942 for use by the navy. The island's name comes from the Squamish people who called it "Memloose-Siwash-il-la-hie" which means "island of dead men." The island's primary function seemed to have been a graveyard, as evidenced by human remains found in cedar boxes in the branches of trees. The island was also used as a burial ground for smallpox victims in 1888. There is no public access to the island.
- **Nine O'Clock Gun:** You can hear the gun every evening at precisely 9:00pm. The gun is a loud old English sea cannon that was placed in the park over 100 years ago. Originally, it was fired to remind local fishermen of fishing time limits, but now it sounds every evening at 9:00pm as a time signal and a tradition.
- **Totem Poles:** Totem poles are unique to the natives of the Northwest coast of North America, and tell eloquent stories about their family hierarchies. The poles are the most visited spot in the park, and the most popular tourist attraction in British Columbia.
- **Brockton Point Lighthouse:** The first lighthouse was built here in 1890, but the present one was installed in 1915 when the Coast Guard installed a fully-automated light.
- **"The Girl in the Wetsuit":** Copenhagen has its Little Mermaid; Vancouver has the Girl in the Wetsuit. The figure was unveiled in 1972.
- **Siwash Rock:** Legend has it that Siwash Rock is actually a young Indian chief who was turned to stone by four supernatural giants.
- **Empress of Japan figurehead:** The ornate dragon's head was restored in 1928 to honour the original Empress of Japan, a ship that carried cargoes of silk from Japan to Vancouver (1891 – 1922).

Vancouver Aquarium

This underwater wonderland is home to a dizzying variety of fish and aquatic mammals in natural habitats. Get an up-close look at the multi-coloured life inside a tidal pool, or marvel at deadly piranhas, scary insects, and beluga whales. The whale pool is a must, especially around feeding time. Underwater windows provide a rare close-up view of these enormous but gentle creatures. Use your attractions pass for entry. (www.vanaqua.org)

Lost Lagoon

Native Indian poet Pauline Johnson named this large pond. The waters of the lagoon once disappeared at low tide, but today it's landlocked and a haven for wildfowl.

Prospect Point

Prospect is the summit of Stanley Park at 64 metres above sea level, and it offers breathtaking panoramic views of the North Shore. Across Burrard Inlet along the northern shore are docks, grain terminals, and huge piles of sulphur waiting to be loaded onto ships.

Hollow Tree

The Hollow Tree is perhaps the most famous tree in the park. There are more archival pictures of the tree than of all the other attractions in Stanley Park. The rugged old tree is 5.5 metres in diameter – the largest diameter of any tree in the park, dead or alive. No one is sure how the tree died, but it was probably struck by lightning.

Dining in the Park

Stanley Park has several great dining options available. From stopping by a concession stand for a latte or a hotdog, to firstclass fine-dining, you're bound to find something that satisfies your hunger after a day exploring the park.

- **The Fish House in Stanley Park:** The moment you arrive, you can't help but relax. Look out onto panoramic English Bay views or the spectacular garden and forest views of the park. Enjoy exceptional seafood, fresh oyster bar and famous flaming prawns. (www.fishhousestanleypark.com)
- **Sequoia Grill:** With towering trees in its backyard and the ocean at its front door, Sequoia Grill sits cosily at water's edge on Stanley Park's Ferguson Point. Experience fresh, local ingredients and cross-cultural cuisine influences – resulting in comfortable and contemporary dining with a great sunset view. (www.sequoiagrill.com)
- **Prospect Point Café:** Whether you are looking to satisfy your hunger with a quick bite from the Café Express – or want to sit back and relax and enjoy the view in the fully licensed, full-service Dining Room, Prospect Point Café has something for everyone. (www.prospectpoint.ca)

Interesting Facts

- In 1909, the City of New York presented Vancouver with a gift of eight pairs of grey squirrels for Stanley Park. Now the park is full of them!
- Every day Stanley Park's trees pump out enough oxygen for 11,700 people while providing a home for more than 200 kinds of birds and dozens of species of mammals.
- In addition to the above attractions, Stanley Park also has a petting zoo, rose and rhododendron gardens, a miniature railway, a pitch-and-putt golf course, and an open-air summer theatre.
- Eight million people a year visit Stanley Park. Even so, on the busiest sunny summer Sunday you can still find spots where you are completely alone.
- People have been living on the peninsula we call Stanley Park for at least 8,000 years. The Squamish people used the area around Lumberman's Arch as a summer camp.
- The seawall continues outside of Stanley Park on both sides of the peninsula. The complete distance of the seawall from Canada Place to the Maritime Museum (in Vanier Park) is approximately 32 km (or 20 mi). Coal Harbour seawall construction began in 1992 and is still underway.