Vancouver to Vancouver: The long way round

1679 km
Total Distance

22 hrs
Est Driving Time

Overview

British Columbia is the stuff motorhome road trip dreams are made of. When you pick up your motorhome in Vancouver and take the long way around, heading inland via Salmon Arm and ticking off a range of incredible attractions along the way, you'll experience much more than a taste of what the province has to offer. And whether you're pulled in by the beautiful colours of a Canadian summer or intrigued by a winter road trip in the glistening snow, you are guaranteed to have the adventure of a lifetime. You'll feast on sights of waterfalls, beaches, and forests, and dine on a smorgasbord of activities such as skiing or riding in some of the best and biggest snow fields in North America. Make no mistake, this Vancouver round trip offers a new delight at every turn of the wheel.
Start your **Vancouver motorhome round trip** and make a whole lot of memories with this adventurous leg one. Vancouver itself is an incredible attraction, so don’t be tempted to leave the city too soon - you’ll need at least a day or two to explore it first! Tick off a handful of the province’s most alluring charms, from cascading waterfalls to welcoming hot springs and historic tunnels.

You’ll continue further inland into the Okanagan Valley, where you’ll get a taste of the fruit and wine that make it such a treat for the senses, all before finishing up this portion in gorgeous Kelowna.

Vancouver is no stranger to the list of top places to live in the world, and it won’t take long for you to start thinking about simply refusing to leave. It’s a bustling hub full of restaurants and bars, activities and events, as well as epic mountain scenery and harbour views in almost all directions. Any visit to the city must include some time spent on **Granville Island** and its markets. You can easily while away a day looking at clothing, arts, jewellery, floristry, and every type of food and treat imaginable. Once you’ve had your fill, take a stroll along the waterfront at **Canada Place** and be sure to experience the **FlyOver Canada ride** - a quick but unforgettable introduction to the country’s landscapes. **Stanley Park** is another favourite spot, and it’s an ideal place to stretch your legs on a walk or bike ride around the sea wall, or pack up a picnic to enjoy on warmer days amongst the greenery. Don’t stress if you can’t fit it all in before you get started on your motorhome tour, as you’ll have a bit of time at the end of the trip, too!

Take a photo break at **Bridal Veil Falls**, just over an hour from Vancouver. These epic cascades get their name from their resemblance to the flowing white veil of a bride, as they rush down 60 metres of rock face into a bubbling, raging torrent below. It’s a short and pretty walk to the viewing platform from the car park, but note that this attraction is only open between May and October.
Any holiday should be relaxing, and it doesn’t get much more soothing than the spas and pools at Harrison Hot Springs, 90 minutes from Vancouver. Park your campervan at the Harrison Springs RV Park and indulge in one of the five mineral hot pools, or book an activity such as a nature tour, fishing or kayaking trip, or a ride on the bumper cars. Alternatively, simply head out for a hike to discover the stunning local landscape on your own two feet. The heritage walk is an idyllic 90-minute stroll that starts at the visitor’s centre and introduces you to many of the area’s most important sites, and be sure to grab a Ticket to Explore brochure from the centre to learn about each one.

More formally known as the Coquihalla Canyon Provincial Park, the Othello Tunnels are another summertime attraction that’s well worth the stop. The tunnels themselves are old railway routes that were cut through the Coquihalla Gorge in the early 1900s, but today, the rails have been removed, and what remains is a majestic walking and biking path that meanders through the park. The hike is an easy 3.5 kilometre round trip, and bikers are strongly recommended to use flashlights and dismount when passing through the tunnels. The site is closed during winter in case of falling ice and other unstable conditions, but it opens up again in the spring from April 1st through to the end of October for a must-see summertime campervan road trip attraction.

From the tunnels, you can either take the more northern route along Highway 5, or opt for the longer, more scenic (and exciting) route across Highway 3. This alternative adds a couple of fantastic stops along the way; Keremeos and Penticton.

Keremeos is found in the Similkameen Valley, and is chiefly known for its fresh fruit and stunning scenery. Stock up on your supplies at one of the many markets such as the Bear’s Fruit Market or the Parsons Fruit Stand and enjoy some of the juiciest, tastiest snacks grown anywhere in Canada. The Grist Mill and Gardens is another great spot, and as well as a 19th century waterwheel, a real flourmill, regular workshops and a restaurant, it’s also an RV park, so you can take your time and spend a night or two in this British Columbian fruit basket! Before you leave, make a stop at the jaw-dropping Keremeos Columns. These massive basalt columns are more than 30 metres high, and were formed roughly 30 million years ago. It’s the same natural phenomenon that created the Giant’s Causeway in Ireland, and is truly something special to see during your Vancouver campervan itinerary.

The word Penticton literally means ‘A Place to Stay Forever’, so don’t make the mistake of passing it by. The town is in the heart of the Okanagan wine region, so you can easily pass a day popping by the vineyards to taste some of the gems on offer. Bench 1775 Winery, Hillside Winery & Bistro, and Red Rooster Winery are all nearby, and each one offers views that are just as delicious as the vinos. For everything outdoors, make a beeline for Skaha Lake Park, a 21-acre recreation area that offers a red-sand beach, tennis courts, a promenade and a playground for the kids. And finally, for a spot of history, climb aboard the SS Sicamous, the largest surviving stern wheeler in Canada and a fascinating ode to the history of the region with its onboard museum and to-scale model of the Kettle Valley Railway.
From here’s it’s a short and scenic hour-long drive along the edge of the Okanagan Lake towards Kelowna.

**Leg 1 Highlights**

Bridal Veil Falls  Othello Tunnels  Keremeos

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**Leg 2  Kelowna to Lillooet**

389 km  05:00:00

The route from Kelowna to Lillooet is one that further showcases British Columbia and its scenery, ski mountains, and food. There are plenty of wineries to visit, as well as a few intriguing and unique stops such as a lavender farm, a honey bee meadery and a historic village. You can complete this route within just a few days, or it can take a full week if you’re looking to enjoy a handful of days on the slopes along the way. In summer or winter, this is one leg of the motorhome itinerary that’s sure to impress!

Kelowna is a small British Columbian city that’s at the heart of some of the best vineyards, forests, parks, and mountains in the province. You can base yourself here as you explore this natural playground, staying in one of several RV parks in town such as the Hiawatha RV Park or the Apple Valley & Orchard RV Park. Try a tour and tasting session at Mission Hill Winery, which happens to be one of the most well-known vineyards in the province (and one of the most picturesque). Or, take the scenic drive out to the Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm and pick up one of their
botanical products made on site.

One of Kelowna's biggest (pun intended) draw cards is **Big White**, a ski field just an hour out of town. It’s known as Canada’s most family-friendly ski field, and it has won a number of awards for features such as its terrain park, grooming, and even its snow. The wide expanse of terrain means that it’s rarely ‘busy’, even in mid-winter. Plus, you can also visit during summer and take the **Bullet Chair** to the top to explore the gorgeous wild flowers and scenery with a mountain hike.

For something a little different and decidedly sweet, make a stop at **Planet Bee Honey Farm & Meadery** on your way north as you pass through Vernon. Even if you don’t have young ones in tow, this attraction offers a rare glimpse into the world of honey bees. You can attend the daily presentation on these creatures and their honey-producing skills, taste test plenty of their products (including honey wine!), and take away a pile of sweet goodies to bring home as delicious souvenirs.

Continue heading north to the town of **Salmon Arm**. Your first question, like many before you, will no doubt be about the name. It in fact comes from the city’s placement on an arm of **Shuswap Lake**, right where **Salmon River** meets the water’s edge. There are certainly more wineries in the area if they’ve been a fan favourite so far, but there are plenty more sights in town such as the **RJ Haney Heritage Village & Museum**. This attraction is a 40-acre park filled with original and replica historic buildings, including a tiny church, a blacksmith, school and homestead. Better yet, it’s located right next to the **Salmon Arm Camping Resort**, which welcomes countless travellers arriving with motorhomes. Any trip to the city must also include a stroll along the charming wooden pier that juts out onto the lake, as not only is it pretty, it’s also the longest wooden wharf in North America.

Before leaving town, make a day trip out to the **Revelstoke Ski Resort**. This is one of the smaller, more intimate British Columbian ski areas, so it usually offers wide open runs as well as its year-round phenomenal views over the valley. There’s a total of 515,000 acres of terrain, and it’s known for its epic powder days and fresh lines, so you can look forward to a day of big smiles and aching thighs from this mountain. Be sure to grab a bite to eat in **The Village Idiot**, the local bar and restaurant that is packed with locals and visitors every night of the week thanks to its incredible food and welcoming ski-town atmosphere.

Finally, make your way across to Lillooet for a few scenic hours of driving across Canada’s Highway 1.
Leg 2 Highlights

Big White  Planet Bee Honey Farm  Revelstoke Ski Resort

Leg 3  Lillooet to Nanaimo

Driving time: 4 hours (plus 2 by ferry)

Taking you from Lillooet to Nanaimo, leg three of your Vancouver roundtrip motorhome tour invites you to soak up even more epic scenery. Lillooet is everything a small town can be, and your Joffre Lakes hike will leave you out of breath and out of words. Whistler, a village at the base of North America's largest ski field, is an absolute treasure regardless of the time of year, and the Sea to Sky Gondola experience will prove that there's no such thing as too much BC scenery!

Lillooet is another gorgeous example of a small BC town that can easily capture your travelling heart and make you want to stay a while. Seton Lake is one of its best attractions with a beach, viewpoints, a picnic area, and even a campground where you can park up for the night. There's a museum and visitor centre, the Fort Berens Winery (Lillooet's first!), and some fantastic hiking routes such as the Peanut Lake trail and Red Rock. And if you happen to be there on a Friday, stop by the summer Farmer's Market in town for a delicious fresh breakfast and a few snacks for the road.

The Joffre Lakes trail has everything you could ask for in a hiking trail - incredible scenery that covers lakes, mountain sides and a glacier, a challenging but manageable slope, and a four-hour timeframe that makes it easy to complete within a day. There really is no way to describe the
vibrant cobalt blue of these glacial lakes, or the lush forest green that blankets the mountainsides in every direction. There are three lakes in total, the first of which is just minutes from the car park, and the second two which demand a sacrifice in sweat and burning thighs for their promised surreal beauty. Pack a picnic, bring plenty of water and get your camera ready for some of the best scenery in Canada.

Continue winding your way south and you’ll find your way to **Whistler**, a ski town that is so much more than your usual ski town.

Named after the sounds of the many whistling marmots who live on the mountains, **Whistler** helped host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, which saw the small town flourish into an internationally renowned winter destination. Naturally, the twin mountains of **Whistler** and **Blackcomb** are like magnets for any skier or snowboarder, and the breathtaking **Peak 2 Peak gondola** that ferries people between the two is open for sightseers as well as snow fiends. Come summer, the mountains smoothly transition into mountain biking and hiking meccas, so you’ll never be short of an adventure or two. The village itself is well designed to add plenty of extra activities too, from a new escape room, to the indulgent **Scandinave Spa**, and a range of wilderness experiences such as ziplining, black bear sightseeing tours, ATV driving, treetops adventures, snowmobiling, and more. You’ll wake up every day with aching muscles from all the fun you’re having, and still go back for more. The **Whistler RV Park** is the ideal place to stay, just aim to book in advance as it can get busy through the high seasons.

You’ll be able to tear yourself away from Whistler knowing what’s coming next - **Squamish** and its awesome **Sea to Sky Gondola**. Take a 10-minute ride up from the valley floor to the Summit Lodge, where you can stop and admire the epic scenery of the valley below, **Howe Sound** in the distance, the **Stawamus Chief** rock face, and the **Coast Mountain Range** all around you. A walk across the 100-metre Sky Pilot Suspension Bridge is a must, and you can simply keep going with one of the many hiking trails looping away from the top. For the more adventurous among you, you can try the **Via Ferrata** (the Iron Way), a unique climbing experience where you’ll be guided up a series of metal rungs on a steep cliff face, and can feel the thrill of the climb as you take in the flawless landscapes around you.

From here, it’s a scenic and stunning drive along the **Sea to Sky Highway** down to **Horseshoe Bay**, where you’ll jump on an equally gorgeous ferry and head across to **Nanaimo** on **Vancouver Island**.
Leg 3 Highlights

Joffre Lakes  Whistler  Squamish

Leg 4  Nanaimo to Vancouver

Driving Time: 6.5 hours (plus 2 by ferry)

The final leg of your BC motorhome itinerary is one of soaring trees like cathedrals, surfing beaches, a vertigo-inducing suspension bridge and a spot of magical night skiing spent watching the sunset over Vancouver city. It doesn’t get much better than this, so give yourself plenty of time to cover these last few stops and revisit any of your favourite Vancouver attractions from the start of the trip.

Nanaimo is a small seaside town where you can take a step back, relax, explore the old quarter up the hill, and enjoy a few of its finest bars and eateries. Grab a spot at the Living Forest Oceanside campground, as it offers its own range of activities from kayaking and swimming, as well as being conveniently placed for your stay. The Harbourfront Walkway in Nanaimo is a real highlight, and it’s a gorgeous spot for a scuba dive, as one of the top 10 cold water dive locations in the world.

Leaving Nanaimo, you’ll head northwest on H-19 before turning inland on H-4.

Along the way, make a stop at Cathedral Grove. This area is resplendent with ancient Douglas fir trees, some of which are up to 800 years old. The scale of these forest giants is unbelievable, measuring up to 75 metres in height and 9 metres in circumference. As well as Douglas firs, a walk through these woods will uncover heritage red cedar trees important to the Aboriginal people,
which have had their bark stripped off for use in ceremonies. These big trees are mind-boggling, and make for a worthy stop on your drive to Tofino.

Tofino is an area that covers a chunk of peninsula in Clayoquot Sound, with the Tofino township sitting right at the tip. The entire region is known for its wilderness and its prime surfing spots, which are coveted by keen surfers all year round. If you've never tried the sport before, now is the time - enroll yourself in a lesson in one of the many surf schools such as the Pacific Surf School, which has been voted the best in town. Or, you can simply pick up boards and head to one of the favourite surf beaches like Cox Bay or Chesterman Beach. A hike through the Pacific Rim National Park either during your stay in Tofino or on the way out is a must, and no visit to the town is complete without a bite to eat at the famous Tacofino taco truck.

Take your time winding your way back over the island and onto the ferry back to the mainland. Here, you'll make a beeline for the Capilano Suspension Bridge.

Located just outside of central Vancouver, the Capilano Suspension Bridge is a perennial favourite amongst visitors. The suspension bridge itself has been amazing anyone who steps on it since 1889. It covers 137 metres, crossing more than 70 metres above the Capilano River through a glorious forest setting. During your visit, you can also tackle the exhilarating treetops adventure, try the gravity-defying cliffwalk, and learn more about the region's rich cultural history at the Story Centre. It's a wonderful natural attraction for adults and kids alike, so don't miss it on your drive back towards the city.

A mere hop, skip and a ski jump from the bridge is Grouse Mountain, one of the closest ski fields to Vancouver city and a spectacular place to try a spot of night skiing. Of course, you can stop in for skiing during the day too, but if you've already hit the slopes at places like Big White and Whistler, the night-time opportunities to glide down a skifield is something a little different. It is open for night skiers and riders from 4pm to 10pm, during which time you can enjoy a few well-lit runs looking out over Vancouver city as the lights come on and start to twinkle back at you. While you're there, don't miss the Light Walk experience, where you'll take off your skis and boards and be mesmerised by a stroll through the trees that have been decorated with thousands upon thousands of fairy lights. This wander through the woods is free with your lift ticket, and makes for a truly unforgettable and magical final experience on your campervan road trip.

British Columbia is everything a motorhome road trip should be. It's got scenery that will leave you speechless and activities that will leave you breathless, and plenty of thrilling surprises in between. Whether you follow this route to a T, or try your own creative version of it, this Vancouver long-way-round trip will have you falling in love with the province and the country long before it's time to head home.
Leg 4 Highlights

Cathedral Grove
Pacific Rim National Park
Grouse Mountain