

# Vancouver at a Glance

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It is said that the United States is a giant melting pot while Canada is a cultural mosaic. I think the saying rings true because when I first came to study in Vancouver three years ago, I was impressed by many restaurants offering various cuisines: Asian, Greek, Mexican ... you name it.

I consider Vancouver an inclusive city because people from around the globe feel easy and comfortable when travelling or living here. It is not a problem to blend in with the locals and I have not experienced any culture shock. When I first arrived, I was not confident of my English even though I had graduated from an English

medium high school. However, because my friends have been encouraging me and practising with me, my English has improved so much that sometimes people would even see me as a native speaker now.

Vancouver is also known as “Raincouver” because it rains a lot throughout the year, with more precipitation even than London! One “weird” phenomenon that I have observed is that people do not usually carry umbrellas even when it is raining cats and dogs or when the sun is scorching in summer. They simply pull up their hoods and keep walking or cycling in the rain.





Another thing out of my expectation is that young people in Vancouver do not enjoy parties. Instead, they prefer outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, fishing, crabbing, cycling in summer. In winter, on the other hand, people would switch to sports such as skiing and snowboarding.

Regarding festivals, Vancouverites embrace and celebrate lots of them due to the diversity of cultures here. There are festive celebrations of different countries throughout the year, such as Italian Day, Diwali Festival, Hanukkah (the Jewish Festival of Light) and the Lunar New Year. On Italian Day, the famous Commercial Drive (also known as Little Italy) will be turned into a street market featuring various performances and food stalls serving everything from pizza to pasta and gelato. It is one of the biggest street events in Vancouver, drawing a couple of hundred thousand people each year. Great importance is also attached to the Lunar New Year celebrations in Canada. In fact, there are multiple events around the city, including lion-dancing, the New Year Parade in Chinatown and the Flower Market, which make you feel as though you were in China.

There are a lot of amazing stories and people that I have encountered in Vancouver. In fact, this city never ceases to surprise me.

