AWESOME TRAVEL PLANS • COMPLIMENTARY MAGAZINE EDITION

THE ULTIMATE VANCOUVER CHRISTMAS ESCAPE

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS • NORTH SHORE MOUNTAINS • FESTIVE MARKETS — 4-Day / 3-Night Long Weekend Itinerary

★ FREE DOWNLOADABLE PDF ITINERARY ★ • YVR — VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AT "AWESOME TRAVEL PLANS"

Join our travel community at **Awesome Travel Plans on Facebook** for free downloadable magazine guides, curated holiday itineraries, hotel spotlights, and airfare alerts! **FOLLOW PAGE →**



Twilight over Burrard Inlet: Canada Place's iconic white sails glow in festive holiday colors beneath the snow-dusted North Shore Mountains.

LONG WEEKEND MASTER SCHEDULE (4 DAYS / 3 NIGHTS)

Framed by the Pacific Ocean and towering coastal peaks, Vancouver transforms each December into a glittering coastal winter wonderland. Within 25 minutes of your downtown hotel, you can sip steaming spiced Glühwein beside Burrard Inlet, cross a rainforest canyon illuminated by hundreds of thousands of fairy lights, and skate atop an alpine mountain peak overlooking the city lights.

DAY	DISTRICT & FOCUS	OVERNIGHT	CORE SIGHTSEEING & SIGNATURE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES
Day 1 (Friday)	**Coal Harbour & Waterfront Markets**	Downtown / Coal Harbour	Arrival at YVR (26-min Canada Line SkyTrain to Waterfront), *Canada Place Sails of Light*, *Flyover Soar with Santa*, and evening Bavarian dining at the **Vancouver Christmas Market**.
Day 2 (Saturday)	**North Shore Mountains & Rainforest Lights**	Downtown / Coal Harbour	Full-day alpine & canyon excursion: Skyride gondola to **Grouse Mountain Peak of Christmas** (skating pond, reindeer & Light Walk) and twilight at **Capilano Suspension Bridge Canyon Lights**.
Day 3 (Sunday)	**Artisan Public Markets & Botanical Lights**	Downtown / Coal Harbour	False Creek ferry to **Granville Island Public Market**, outdoor ice skating at **Robson Square**, historic Gastown Steam Clock, and 1+ million lights at **VanDusen Festival of Lights**.
Day 4 (Monday)	**Stanley Park Seawall & Departure**	Homeward (YVR)	Morning stroll along the **Stanley Park Seawall**, festive *Holiday Afternoon Tea* at Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, last-minute Robson Street shopping & flight home from YVR.

SIGNATURE HOLIDAY PILLAR SPOTLIGHT: LIGHTS, MOUNTAINS & MARKETS



Festive Markets: The 30-foot walk-in Christmas Pyramid and artisan wooden chalets at the Vancouver Christmas Market (Jack Poole Plaza).



Christmas Lights: Crossing the 450-foot Capilano Suspension Bridge during Canyon Lights, suspended 230 feet above the illuminated river canyon.

1. Sparkling Christmas Lights Across Rainforest & Garden

Vancouver's mild coastal climate allows visitors to stroll outdoors through world-renowned botanical and rainforest light installations without sub-zero freeze. At **Capilano Suspension Bridge Park's Canyon Lights** in North Vancouver, the world-famous 450-foot suspension bridge, Treetops Adventure canopy bridges, and cliffside Cliffwalk glow from end to end amidst towering Douglas firs. Back in the city, **VanDusen Botanical Garden's Festival of Lights** blankets 15 acres of lakeside paths and woodland gardens in over one million twinkling bulbs synchronized to holiday music.

2. Snow-Capped North Shore Mountains

Rising dramatically right across Burrard Inlet, the North Shore Mountains deliver true snowy alpine magic just 20 minutes from downtown. Board the scenic aerial Skyride to **Grouse Mountain's The Peak of Christmas**—Vancouver's official North Pole at 4,100 feet. Guests can lace up skates on the 8,000-square-foot outdoor mountaintop skating pond, meet Santa's real reindeer (Dancer and Vixen), wander the glowing snowshoe Light Walk around Blue Grouse Lake, and dine with panoramic city-to-sea views. Travelers seeking an additional coastal fjord drive can also ride the **Sea to Sky Gondola** along Highway 99 in Squamish.



Alpine Magic: Gliding across the 8,000-square-foot mountaintop skating pond at Grouse Mountain's Peak of Christmas with city lights below.

3. Authentic German & Culinary Holiday Markets

Set right on the Coal Harbour waterfront beside the Olympic Cauldron, the **Vancouver Christmas Market** at Jack Poole Plaza brings an authentic German Christkindlmarkt to the Pacific Northwest. Browse more than 80 wooden huts selling hand-carved European ornaments, nutcrackers, and local crafts while feasting on sizzling bratwurst, melted Alpine raclette, warm pretzels, chimney cakes, and traditional mulled Glühwein beneath live choir performances on the Flying Stage. Pair this evening tradition with a daytime culinary tour of the indoor **Granville Island Public Market** across False Creek.

HOTEL SPOTLIGHT & VERIFIED BOOKING LINKS

Staying in Coal Harbour or the Downtown core places you within easy walking distance of Canada Place, Jack Poole Plaza, Robson Street, and the complimentary shuttle pick-up points for Capilano and Grouse Mountain.

RECOMMENDED HOTEL	LOCATION	SIGNATURE HOLIDAY PERKS & OFFICIAL BOOKING LINK
Fairmont Waterfront (★ Editor's Top Pick)	Coal Harbour Waterfront	Directly opposite Canada Place and steps from the Vancouver Christmas Market. Features a heated year-round outdoor rooftop pool overlooking the North Shore mountains and artisanal West Coast dining at ARC Restaurant. **Visit Official Hotel Site →**
Fairmont Hotel Vancouver	Downtown Core (W. Georgia St)	Affectionately known as the "Castle in the City," this chateau-style heritage icon hosts festive lobby trees, themed holiday pop-up lounges, and Holiday Afternoon Tea at Notch8. **Visit Official Hotel Site →**

RECOMMENDED HOTEL	LOCATION	SIGNATURE HOLIDAY PERKS & OFFICIAL BOOKING LINK
Pan Pacific Vancouver	Canada Place Pier	Perched directly atop Canada Place beneath the glowing holiday sails, offering unobstructed harbour and mountain vistas, a heated saltwater rooftop pool, and immediate access to Flyover. **Visit Official Hotel Site →**
Fairmont Pacific Rim	Coal Harbour	Forbes Five-Star contemporary luxury one block from Jack Poole Plaza, celebrated for nightly live music in The Lobby Lounge, Botanist restaurant, and Nordic-style rooftop spa. **Visit Official Hotel Site →**
Rosewood Hotel Georgia	Robson Square / Art Gallery	Timeless 1920s roaring-twenties elegance directly across from the Robson Square Ice Rink, featuring the winterized Reflections Garden Terrace and Hawksworth Restaurant. **Visit Official Hotel Site →**

MUST-BOOK VANCOUVER CHRISTMAS TOURS & TICKETS (VERIFIED LINKS)

Holiday timed-entry windows sell out quickly on December weekends. Reserve your preferred entry slots in advance using the official attraction links below:

- ☑ **Vancouver Christmas Market (Jack Poole Plaza)** — Timed-entry admission to 80+ artisan huts, the Christmas Carousel, walk-in Christmas tree, and Flying Stage live music.
- ☑ **Capilano Suspension Bridge Park: Canyon Lights** — Includes suspension bridge, Treetops Adventure, Cliffwalk, 3D WILDLIGHT rainforest projections, and free downtown shuttle service. (**Book Timed Tickets Here**)
- ☑ **Grouse Mountain: The Peak of Christmas Admission** — All-inclusive Mountain Admission Ticket covering the round-trip Skyride gondola, Mountaintop Skating Pond, Light Walk, Santa's Workshop, and Reindeer Talks.
- ☑ **VanDusen Botanical Garden: Festival of Lights** — Evening timed ticket to explore 15 acres illuminated by over one million festive lights and Dancing Lights displays.
- ☑ **Flyover in Vancouver at Canada Place (Soar with Santa)** — Immersive 4D flying theatre ride soaring across Canada's landscapes and onward to the North Pole with wind, mist, and pine scents.
- ☑ **Sea to Sky Gondola Alpine Experience** — Scenic winter day-trip option up the Sea-to-Sky Highway featuring the Sky Pilot Suspension Bridge and Howe Sound views.

DAY-BY-DAY LONG WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS (DAYS 1–4)

Day 1 (Friday): Waterfront Lights, Canada Place & The German Christmas Market

Touch down at Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and board the direct Canada Line SkyTrain (26 minutes) to Waterfront Station, checking into **Fairmont Waterfront** or **Pan Pacific Vancouver**.

- **Afternoon — Canada Place & Flyover:** Stroll the outdoor promenade at Canada Place to admire historic Woodward's department store holiday window displays, the avenue of decorated trees, and the 15-foot snow globe. Step inside for **Flyover in Vancouver** to experience the seasonal *Soar with Santa* flight ride.
- **Evening — Vancouver Christmas Market:** Walk five minutes west along the harbour seawall to Jack Poole Plaza for your timed entry to the **Vancouver Christmas Market**. Sip hot spiced Glühwein in a collectible holiday mug, feast on pork hock, schnitzel, and freshly scraped Swiss raclette, walk through the Lovers' Lane light tunnel, and shop for German glass ornaments beneath the glowing sails of Canada Place.

Day 2 (Saturday): North Shore Alpine Peaks & Canyon Lights

Dedicate Saturday to Vancouver's legendary North Shore, combining snowy mountain heights with an enchanted temperate rainforest canyon just down the road on Capilano Road.

- **Morning & Midday — Grouse Mountain's Peak of Christmas:** Catch the complimentary seasonal shuttle from Canada Place (or SeaBus to Lonsdale Quay + Bus #236) to the base of **Grouse Mountain**. Ride the red Skyride gondola up 3,700 vertical feet into a snow-covered alpine village. Rent skates at the Fireside Hut to glide across the 8,000-square-foot mountaintop pond, attend the 12:00 PM Reindeer Talk behind the pond, and warm up with Alpine cheese fondue or hot cider at Altitudes Bistro.
- **Late Afternoon & Evening — Capilano Canyon Lights:** Descend Grouse Mountain by 4:00 PM (just five minutes down the hill) for your twilight reservation at **Capilano Suspension Bridge Park's Canyon Lights**. Cross the swaying suspension bridge glowing above the Capilano River, walk 110 feet high through illuminated Douglas firs on Treetops Adventure, and trace the granite precipice on the twinkling Cliffwalk before dining at The Cliff House Restaurant.

Day 3 (Sunday): Granville Island Market, Robson Square Skating & VanDusen Lights

Explore Vancouver's vibrant culinary neighbourhoods by day before immersing yourself in the city's largest botanical holiday light spectacle after dark.

- **Morning — Granville Island Public Market:** Board a cheerful rainbow-colored False Creek Ferry or Aquabus across False Creek to **Granville Island Public Market**. Sample smoked wild Pacific salmon, artisanal Canadian cheeses, Lee's Donuts, and warm clam chowder inside the bustling market halls, then browse Net Loft studios and local glassblowing workshops for one-of-a-kind holiday gifts.
- **Afternoon — Robson Square & Gastown:** Head to the outdoor covered ice rink at Robson Square in downtown Vancouver (free admission with your own skates, or low-cost skate rentals on-site). Afterward, walk down to historic Gastown to photograph the whistling Victorian Steam Clock along cobblestone Water Street trimmed in festive cedar garlands.
- **Evening — VanDusen Festival of Lights:** Take a 15-minute taxi south to **VanDusen Botanical Garden**. Follow lakeside loops past over one million lights, watch the choreographed Dancing Lights show on Livingstone Lake, and treat yourself to hot chocolate and mini-donuts amidst the illuminated sequoias.

Day 4 (Monday): Stanley Park Seawall, Castle Holiday Tea & Departure

Soak up your final coastal views and a beloved Vancouver luxury hotel tradition before your afternoon flight home.

- **Morning — Stanley Park Seawall & Totem Poles:** Walk or cycle from Coal Harbour along the scenic waterfront Stanley Park Seawall to Brockton Point to view the carved First Nations Totem Poles and panoramic views of the Lions Gate Bridge and North Shore mountains.
- **Midday — Holiday Afternoon Tea at the Castle:** Celebrate the end of your trip at **Fairmont Hotel Vancouver** with Holiday Afternoon Tea at Notch8, featuring tiered savories, warm scones with Devonshire cream, and Christmas pastries, before riding the Canada Line back to YVR Airport.

ESSENTIAL VANCOUVER WINTER TRAVEL GUIDE

ENTRY & PASSPORTS	CURRENCY & PAYMENTS	TRANSIT & FREE SHUTTLES	WINTER PACKING TIPS
U.S. citizens require a valid passport (no visa needed). Visa-exempt international air travelers require a Canadian eTA prior to boarding.	Canadian Dollar (CAD). Contactless tap-to-pay (Visa, Mastercard, Apple/Google Pay) is accepted everywhere, including SkyTrain gates and market stalls.	Tap any credit card at TransLink SkyTrain and SeaBus gates. Both Capilano Suspension Bridge and Grouse Mountain run free seasonal shuttles from Canada Place.	Downtown averages 3°C to 8°C (38°F–46°F) with coastal mist, while Grouse Mountain sits below freezing with snow. Pack a waterproof jacket, warm layers, gloves, and waterproof boots.

LOVE THIS FREE ITINERARY? FOLLOW "AWESOME TRAVEL PLANS" ON FACEBOOK!

Connect with our community at **Awesome Travel Plans on Facebook** for more free downloadable travel magazines & seasonal guides! **JOIN US →**