

BC Fact Sheet

Mountains, beaches, islands, forest and wilderness — it's all here, in large, sometimes awe-inspiring, numbers. It's not all about wilderness, though. Canada's westernmost province is also a top choice for safe, vibrant cities, great little arts towns and a fascinating blend of cultures.

The Land

- British Columbia is bordered by Alberta to the east, the states of Washington, Idaho and Montana to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The Alaska Panhandle and the Canadian territories of Yukon and the Northwest Territories form the northern border.
- At 944,735 square kilometres (364,764 square miles), BC is larger than France and Germany combined. It's larger than the total area of Washington, Oregon and California.
- British Columbia is Canada's third largest province, after Quebec and Ontario. It covers about 9.5 per cent of Canada's surface area.
- A series of southeast-northwest running mountain ranges, from the Rockies in the east to the Coast Mountains and Insular Mountains (Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii) in the west, serrate the landscape into a series of peaks, plateaus and valleys.
- British Columbia's rugged coastline stretches for 25,725 kilometres (15,985 miles), including deep, mountainous fjords and nearly 28,000 marine islands, the vast majority of which are uninhabited.
- The largest island, at 460 kilometres (286 miles) long, is Vancouver Island. Home to Victoria, the provincial capital, it lies off the southwest corner of BC's mainland.
- More than 15 per cent of BC's land base, or 14.3 million hectares (35.34 million acres), is protected in a total of 1,029 provincial parks, conservancies, ecological reserves and recreation areas, and seven national parks.

The People

- Most of BC's population of over four million people (4,631,302 in 2014, BC Stats) clusters in the province's southwest corner, in and around the cities of Vancouver and Victoria. The Okanagan Valley is the most populated inland region.
- Though small in numbers, British Columbians are a cosmopolitan and multi-cultural group. A large proportion of residents have moved here from other parts of Canada and from around the world.

- Vancouver, in the mainland's southwest corner, is BC's largest city, with a 2014 population of 640,469.
- Greater Vancouver is the province's largest metropolitan area, with a population (in 2014) of 2,474,123 or slightly more than half of BC's population.

Other Key Centres	2014 Population
Kamloops	89,417
Kelowna	121,422
Nanaimo	88,869
Nelson	10,532
Prince George	73,590
Prince Rupert	11,918
Victoria	83,200
Capital Regional District (Victoria Metropolitan Area)	372,463
Whistler	10,447

The Climate

- Coastal British Columbia, including Vancouver and Victoria, enjoys the mildest climate in Canada. Summers are warm but not hot, and winters are mild and wet, with little snow at sea level. Inland, BC has a more typically Canadian climate, with hot, dry summers and cold, snowy winters.
- The climate can vary enormously across the province. BC is home to several regional micro-climates that are intrinsically connected to its varied landscapes, ranging from alpine to interior plains, desert to coastal rainforest.

The Time

- Most of British Columbia is on Pacific Standard Time (the same as Los Angeles, three hours behind Toronto and New York). A few communities along the Alberta border (notably Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Golden, Kimberley and Cranbrook) use Mountain Standard Time.