

THINGS TO DO IN THE SEATTLE & VANCOUVER BANFF AREAS

WWW.LIVESTRONG.COM

Aug 18, 2011 | By Elizabeth Kovar

Photo Credit Thinkstock/Comstock/Getty Images

Visitors of the Pacific Northwest and Canada are treated to picturesque views of dramatic landscapes. From urban city streets to jagged mountain peaks, Seattle, Vancouver, British Columbia and Banff, Canada, make up a playground for outdoor enthusiasts. Elevating the heart rate is possible through seasonal activities such as hiking, biking, skiing or kayaking. Enjoying the [Canadian Rockies](#) or the Puget Sound through active pursuits allows visitors to experience the best of the Pacific Northwest.

HIKING

Hiking by far is one of the most scenic outdoor pursuits visitors experience. Seattle hiking is best experienced 30 minutes east of the city in Mt. Baker - Snoqualmie National Forest. Hike the Snow Lake Trail for an eight-mile [round trip](#) of scenic coniferous mountains, trickling waterfalls and the gorgeous snow lake. Say "hello" to B.C. on the scenic Goat Mountain trail. Start this hike with a gondola ride to the Grouse chalet to hike the trail north of Goat Mountain. This properly signed trail features a spectacular panoramic views of Vancouver, Vancouver Island and Coast Mountains. Banff hikers enjoy the challenging Paradise Valley/Larch Valley trail. Located near Lake Louise, this trail treks amongst mountainous and meadow terrains. This 10.5-mile round trip trail features a breathtaking view of Moraine Lake.

Sponsored Links

BIKING

Biking city streets or mountain paths is breathtaking visually and physically for cyclers. Seattle cyclers have the opportunity to view the [Puget Sound](#) and Olympic mountains while biking along Alki beach utilizing the West Seattle bike path. Competitive cyclists ride the 50-mile trail that starts at Kenmore Logboom Park and ends at Marymoor Park. This path features amazing views of the Sammamish River. Adventurous Canadian riders cycle the 178-mile road starting in Banff and ending in Jasper. This intense ride uses Icefields Parkway which features some of the most beautiful views of the Canadian Rockies. Vancouver mountain bikers ride the trails of Grouse Mountain for some of the best mountain biking in B.C. Try the intense and jagged Good Samaritan Trail on Mount Seymour for a sweaty workout.

KAYAKING

Paddlers experience the water by self-guided or group guided tours. The Northwest Outdoor Center in Seattle rents kayaks year-round. Novice or intermediate paddlers take lessons or group tours to experience sea or lake kayaking. Kayak trips to the San Juan Islands, Chuckanut Bay or the Nisqually River increases the heart rate as paddlers enjoy the view of Seattle. British Columbia paddlers rent kayaks or standing paddle boards from Ecomarine [Ocean Kayak](#) Centre. Lessons or day trips are available to paddle amongst Vancouver waters, Clayoquot Sound, Haida Gwaii and Johnstone Strait.

SKIING

Skiing is not only beautiful and intense, but skiers have the opportunity to choose from numerous terrains. Three main ski areas include Mount Norquay, Sunshine Village and Lake Louise. Lake Louise ski area is the largest of the three and is extremely challenging. The 4,200 acres of skiing and 113 runs makes this ski area the largest in North America. Skiers can warm up in the Temple Lodge for food and relaxation. Skiing in Seattle is best experienced at the Snoqualmie Pass. Located approximately 45 minutes east of Seattle skiers have the option to downhill or cross country ski. Skiing at the summit of Snoqualmie offers four ski areas featuring a total of 65 runs. Lessons and ski rentals operate during the winter months.

BEACH ACTIVITIES

Believe it or not, these mountainous areas also feature beaches and outdoor activities during the summer months. Vancouver's English Bay Beach is a perfect place to view British Columbia sunsets. Beach walkers and children play at the playgrounds to stay active. Kitsilano Beach features chilly ocean swimming, but warm water swimmers use the heated Kitsilano pools. Seattle locals and visitors flock to Alki beach for a full day of chilly water swimming, sunbathing, and beach walking. A 2.5 mile path outlines the beach to utilize for running, walking, skating or cycling. This beach reassures locals that this is the Pacific Northwest, while beach users view the Olympic mountains from shore.

Read more: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/194646-things-to-do-in-the-seattle-vancouver-banff-areas/#ixzz2A8pJ5FgR>