

Adventures on the Rocky Mountaineer and Alaska Cruise – July 2019 Part 5 – Vancouver

Monday evening

We arrived into Vancouver station around 5pm and picked up our coach transfer to Vancouver Four Seasons hotel. Our evening was spent at leisure so we wasted no time showering and changing and went for our first explore of the area. We walked for 10 minutes and found the historic and famous Gastown-home to the famous steam powered clock

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and lots of bars and restaurants.

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The pipes on the Steam clock are powered by steam and every 15 minutes you can hear the tooting steam whistle. There literally is a restaurant for every type of world cuisine imaginable and so it's no surprise that Vancouver is well known for its culinary experiences. We tried a couple of local lagers in the Steamworks brewery before heading to Tacofino, a highly recommended Mexican street food restaurant.

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We had a feast of fish and meat tacos which were delicious before trying a pint at The Wild Pig. All the excitement of the past few days had begun to catch up on us so we had an earlyish night.

Tuesday

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The morning was spent on a guided tour of Vancouver: the first part taking in sights of downtown from the comfort of the coach, although we had some time at the really beautiful Dr Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese gardens within Chinatown. Chinatown is Vancouver's oldest district- it actually predates the city itself. We saw turtles bobbing around in the water and explored the small but really tranquil gardens.

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The tour moved on to the beautiful Stanley Park which is actually one of North America's largest urban green spaces! It is made up of several different areas and has a 5.5 mile sea wall that surrounds the park. Our favourite part of the park was the Totem Park where we saw a collection of colourful Totem

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Poles and learnt about how they were made,
painted and why they were there. Each one
told its own story and it was fascinating.

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There are great views of the harbour and the city skyline from this point- it reminded us of Chicago.



We then drove along the sea wall to Prospect Point- a great point to check out Lion's bridge and where we'd be travelling on the

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cruise ship tomorrow. On one side was the
sea wall and the views across the bay, the
other was huge red wood trees.



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Our next stop was one of our favourite places
of the trip so far: Granville Island. This small
little island is home to Granville Island Mar-
ket which is a food lovers paradise.



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It's full of street food stalls along with some
fruit and veg stalls and a great place to pick
up some souvenirs. We headed straight to
the sushi stall before going for a Granville is-
land beer.

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We then went for battered salmon and chips – an interesting local variation on our seaside fish and chips we get in England. It was DELICIOUS! We also tried battered oysters – because when will you ever see these again?! I wasn't a fan so Keefy ended up with two of those!

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We had a walk around the island stopping every minute or two for more pictures, it's just so pretty- before heading to the Granville Island Brewing company for some tastes of their unusual flavoured lager.



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We made our own way back to the hotel, taking the local aqua bus to get back onto the main Vancouver Island before taking a mile or so walk back up to our hotel.



We made use of the pool and hot tub facilities at the Four Seasons before heading back

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out for dinner. We walked back down to Gastown to go to a barbecue joint that we'd seen the previous day. Our meal was delicious and thankfully not too largely portioned as we were still rather full from our Granville Island food earlier!

After dinner, we walked the mile or so to the Olympic Village where we picked up the night ferry for a cheeky little DIY harbour cruise as the sun set. It's always a favourite for us to hop onto the water and see any new city's skyline from that perspective. The Olympic park was lit up – we really enjoyed our evening.

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On our walk back to the hotel we came across a family of raccoons scavenging in the rubbish which was a bizarre sight to see!

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along with rather a lot of homeless people
and people off their faces (presumably on
cannabis which is legalised here). In fact
when we nipped into the convenience store
to pick up water for our room, a guy was go-
ing wild at the poor staff. He was off his face
and we felt a bit intimidated so we hot footed
it back to the safety of our hotel!

Wednesday

We had the morning at leisure before our
lunchtime embarkation of the MS Volendam.
As it was raining, we had a lay in, and
grabbed breakfast from the 7 11 store down
the road before taking a wander around the
Pacific Rim retail outlet which was conve-
niently situated next door to and adjoining

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our hotel.

By 11.30 our coach had arrived to take us the 2 minute drive to the cruise terminal at Canada Place. I was very excited as I've never been on a proper cruise before so was looking forward to seeing our ship, Holland and America line's MS Volendam.

Until next time

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