



Grouse Mountain sees approximately 1.3 million annual visitors. Inset: Capilano Suspension Bridge and English Bay Beach at sunset. CONTRIBUTED

# Ready, set, summer tourism

## MAJESTIC Vancouver's tourism industry heats up for 2016

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With its majestic natural surroundings, world-class restaurants and energetic cultural festivals, Vancouver offers visitors the perfect mix of urban excitement and outdoor adventures.

The Lower Mainland's most popular travel destination attracted more than nine million overnight visitors in 2015 and expects to beat that record-breaking number again this year. "Vancouver's tourism

industry supports more than 66,000 jobs, contributes approximately \$1.6 billion in taxes and brings in approximately \$3.5 billion in direct visitor spending," explained Sonu Purhar, communications manager at Tourism Vancouver.

Stanley Park, Granville Island, False Creek and the city's sandy beaches are just a few of the must-see outdoor attractions for summertime tourists — all of which can be accessed from the pedestrianized Seawall. Spanning the shoreline from downtown to Kitsilano, the 22-kilometre Seawall is best explored on two wheels, which will be even easier this summer thanks to the city's new bike and scooter-sharing programs.

"Locals and visitors will have the opportunity to zip between neighbourhoods on Saturna Green System's electric scoot-

ers, or peddle the bike lanes with a new public bike share program," said Purhar.

Fitness enthusiasts of all skill levels travel to Vancouver throughout the year for biking events, dragon boat competitions, marathons and more. From Aug. 26 to Sept. 4, the city will host the inaugural Americas Masters Games — a nine-day event designed to complement the World Masters Games.

Thousands of amateur and professional athletes will be participating in 24 different events — archery, judo and volleyball to name just a few — at venues across the city.

Those looking to stretch their legs and breathe some fresh mountain air can take a quick trip across the Lion's Gate Bridge to the North Shore, where Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, Lynn Canyon and

Grouse Mountain are all ideal venues for scenic hiking and ecological explorations.

Offering breathtaking views of the city below and a range of activities for all ages, Grouse Mountain sees approximately 1.3 million annual visitors. For the 2016 season, the mountain-top resort is celebrating The Summer of Flight with a series of aerial-themed activities on offer in July and August.

"From tandem paragliding to zip line adventures to helicopter tours over the North Shore, a wide variety of airborne adventure awaits our visitors this summer," said communications manager Julia Grant. Home to North America's longest aerial tramway, Grouse Mountain is also launching a brand new flying-inspired activity in summer 2016: the Skyride Surf Adventure.

"Daring sightseers will have the opportunity to ride up the mountain while taking in stunning 360-degree views from a secure platform on the roof of the tram cabin," said Grant.

And even on rainy days, Vancouver has plenty of indoor options to keep visitors entertained, and dry. Tourists can take cover from the wet weather while shopping for designer fashions in the newly expanded Pacific Centre Mall, or immerse themselves in First Nations culture at the Museum of Anthropology.

Meanwhile, culture vultures will be delighted by numerous art exhibitions, festivals and stage performances; highlights for summer 2016 include the Vancouver Art Gallery's new Picasso exhibit and Broadway Across Canada's productions of Newsies and Book of Mormon.