



A ROYAL OVERNIGHT STAY IN VICTORIA B.C.

| By Tracy Beard

At one time or another almost everyone has dreamed of being a prince or princess. In [Victoria, B.C.](#), even if your name is not Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, or Sophie, the Countess of Wessex, you can experience a night of royal treatment. The city, sprinkled with Victorian architecture, sets the stage for visitors to bask in royal traditions. Sip tea along the Tea-riffic Trail, dine on enticing top-quality farm-to-table cuisine at [10 Acres Kitchen](#), and sleep in opulence at the [Magnolia Hotel & Spa](#) where staff eagerly awaits to meet every guest's needs. After a restful night of sleep, begin the day with a lavish breakfast at [Catalano Restaurant & Cicchetti Bar](#).

AN EDUCATION IN TEA

My daughter and I recently traveled to Victoria as part of a girls' weekend away and we experienced the royal treatment. We began by visiting a few stops along the Tea-riffic Trail. At [Silk Road Tea](#) staff explained how frequent tea consumption can improve health. Daniela Cubelic, hailed as "Canada's Queen of Tea" by the Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail, owns and operates Silk Road Tea. The shop specializes in organic teas and produces their own special blends for people to enjoy.

Expertly labeled shelves make it easy for customers to find teas that provide relief for various ailments like sunburns, headaches, and other conditions. Sign up to attend a workshop or event while visiting to learn about the benefits of tea.

HIGH TEA

Later we meandered over to [Venus Sophia Tea Room & Vegetarian Eatery](#) and partook in the long-standing English tradition of high tea. Settling

into comfy chairs at one of the intimate tables, we selected tea and ordered the Signature Afternoon Tea Course.

The feast, presented on a three-tiered tower, came loaded with luscious finger sandwiches, desserts, and customary scones with jam and clotted cream. Mini quiches, dainty cakes and tiny slices of fruit pie made for a delicious assortment of tastings. This lavish tradition of high tea is certainly worthy of anyone's royal agenda.

THE LUXURIOUS MAGNOLIA HOTEL & SPA

After tea, we checked in at the Magnolia Hotel & Spa. The tastefully decorated lobby with rich, dark, wood-paneled walls, comfortable chairs and couches, and an elegant fireplace created an ambiance ripe for relaxing, reading and visiting.

We proceeded to our room and were pleasantly surprised by its extravagance. The elegant corner fireplace gave the room a sense of warmth and home, and the pristine bedding and sheets emanated cleanliness. A bottle of wine chilled in a bucket and a deep sunken tub beckoned us.

The hotel offers a variety of "trails" with maps to guide guests. Whether choosing to participate in the Tea-riffic Trail, Magnolia's Tapas Trail, or one of the other designated city walks, these trails give the inside track to delights within the city. The hotel is located two blocks from Victoria's Inner Harbor, the perfect distance for an evening stroll to view the stunning parliament building framed in lights.

THE SPA MAGNOLIA

If there is extra time before dinner, enjoy a body treatment, facial, or massage in the spa, or get in a workout at the hotel's well-equipped fitness center. After relaxing in the spa or working off calories from high tea at the fitness center, head across the street from the hotel to 10 Acres Kitchen.



DINNER AT 10 ACRES KITCHEN

10 Acres Kitchen has three distinct rooms or styles of dining to choose from — the 10 Acres Bistro, the Kitchen, and the Commons. Each room receives regular deliveries of meat, eggs, and fresh produce from the restaurant’s farm. Management designs unique menus for each place striving to mirror what the Pacific Northwest offers. By supporting local seafood purveyors, farmers, and producers, 10 Acres Kitchen assures customers that what is on their plates did not travel far from its source.

Pair a perfectly mixed French 75 or Moscow Mule with the restaurant’s house-made charcuterie, pickled vegetables, and purple potato chips. The Farm Grain Bowl is an excellent entrée with tender chicken, earthy barley and lentils, vegetables, and a poached egg all bathed in a delicious curry sauce. For a great pasta dish, savor the freshly made tagliatelle with assorted mushrooms, and other vegetables. The ingredients are all tossed in a citrus brown-butter cream sauce. Finish dinner with apple pie a la mode; the farm-fresh apples make this dish exceptional.

After a peaceful night’s sleep at the Magnolia, eat breakfast at Catalano Restaurant. Order off the menu or participate in the lavish buffet. The West Coast Omelet with eggs wrapped around wild smoked salmon, caramelized onions, lemon cream cheese, and a side of roasted potatoes and toast is heavenly. The Catalano Waffles come stuffed with double-smoked bacon and Swiss cheese for a rich and filling start to the day. Enjoy a delicious cup of hot coffee and fresh-squeezed orange juice while the friendly and professional staff make you feel like royalty.

Victoria is known for its outdoor activities and beautiful gardens. Visitors with more time should take advantage of and wander through the famous Butchart Gardens, peruse the spectacular Craigdarroch Castle, and engage in nearby water activities of whale watching, kayaking, and sailing. The city boasts a plethora of activities and fine dining establishments to enjoy, so visit Victoria and relive those dreams of being a prince or princess while enveloped in Canadian hospitality. ♦

