

Funky Frog B&B's list of 2018 ACTIVITIES in the Cowichan Valley

The Cowichan Valley is bursting with activity year-round due to its temperate climate. Nestled in a verdant valley just north of Victoria, this area is known for agri-tourism and thriving local food economy - a "foodie" and "locavore" haven.

Qw'utsun (Cowichan) is a Coast Salish word meaning "land warmed by the sun" - a fitting name, considering it has Canada's only Maritime Mediterranean climatic zone. Lush valleys laden with agriculture, verdant rolling hills dotted with vineyards, meandering rivers teeming with fish, mountains laced with mixed-use hiking and mountain biking trails, several shimmering lakes ideal for water-sports, all strung along a protected coastline punctuated with bays and marinas.

Appeal to your sense of adventure: enjoy a farm-to-table experience, sample some local wines, explore the diverse outdoor activities, or treat yourself to local gourmet cuisine in one of our fabulous restaurants.

Create beautiful memories in the Cowichan Valley!

Take a Winery & Cidery Tour

Sip and savour some of the Cowichan Valley's award winning wines and ciders while meandering through the picturesque farmland and vineyards of this lush valley. (see sample list below)

If you wish to leave the car at home, Cheers Cowichan offers small bus tours including wine tasting, galleries, gift shops and restaurants. For more information contact Cheers Cowichan at Call: (250) 710-7391 or visit cheerscowichan.com/

- [Averill Creek Vineyard](#) - 6552 North Road, Duncan, (250) 709-9986
- [Blue Grouse Vineyards](#) - 2182 Lakeside Road, Duncan, (250) 743-3834
- [Cherry Point Estate Wines](#) - 840 Cherry Point Rd, Cowichan Bay, (250) 743-1272
- [Enrico Winery](#) - 3280 Telegraph Rd, Mill Bay, (250) 733-2356
- Glenterra Vineyards and Café - 3897 Cobble Hill Rd, Cobble Hill, (250) 743-2330
- Merridale Cidery - 1230 Merridale Rd, Cobble Hill, (250) 743-4293
- Rocky Creek Winery - 1854 Myhrest Rd, Cowichan Bay, (250) 748-5622
- [Silverside Berry Winery](#) - 3810 Cobble Hill Rd, Cobble Hill, (250) 743-9149
- [Unsworth Vineyards & Bistro](#) - 2915 Cameron Taggart Rd, Mill Bay, (250) 929-2292
- Venturi-Schulze Vineyards - 4235 Vineyard Rd, Cobble Hill, (250) 743-5630
- Zanatta Vineyard & Restaurant - 5039 Marshall Rd, Duncan, (250) 748-2338

Enjoy the Culinary Offerings in the Cowichan Valley

There is something for every taste and budget, from pub fare to award winning cuisine prepared by a celebrity chef and all things in between: bistros, wine bars, cheese shops, and farm-to-table meals:

- Craig Street Brew Pub - fresh hand-crafted brews, local house-made food (a sample list)
- [Genoa Bay Café](#) - waterfront dining featuring west coast and seasonal food
- [Hilary's Cheese and Wine Bar](#) - rustic cheese shop, cafe and wine bar in Cowichan Bay village
- Hudson's on First Restaurant - a chef-prepared fine dining experience in a heritage house setting
- Lion Rampant Pub - pub food with a scottish influence, a selection of beers and scotches and a sunny deck with the most amazing views over Maple Bay
- Merridale Cidery Bistro - cider pairings and seasonal local menu items, patio with orchard views
- Nha Trang Maki Sushi - delicious sushi, Asian-inspired meals and martini bar
- Shipyard Restaurant at Maple Bay Marina - standard pub fare and seafood in marina setting
- Farm Table Inn - gourmet farm restaurant nestled in the forest near Cowichan River
- The Old Firehouse Wine Bar - wine and cocktail bar with casual dining and live music nights
- Thistles Café at Glenterra Vineyard (seasonal) - casual dining in a vineyard setting
- Vinoteca on the Vineyard- Zanatta - locally sourced food and wine pairings in winery setting

Visit a local Farm or Market

Agritourism and the locovore culture are alive and well in the Cowichan Valley, from farmers markets to farm-gate sales, you will be delighted with your choice of all things fresh and local

- [Birds Eye Cove Farm](#) - seasonal farm-to-table pizzas cooked in outdoor wood oven (Mondays and Wednesdays in June, July and August)
- Cowichan Valley Lavender Labyrinth - lavender labyrinth, lavender products
- Damali Lavender Farm - lavender wine and products
- Deerholme Farm - mushroom foraging, cooking classes, private dinners (seasonal)
- [Duncan Farmers Market in the Square](#) - Saturday market in downtown Duncan every Saturday April - October 9 am - 2 pm ~ November - March 10 am - 2 pm Visit the boutique shops in quaint downtown Duncan while you're there!
- Old Farm Market - local produce, farm market and garden centre
- Russell Farms Market - local farm and old-fashioned farm market
- Saison Market Vineyard - baking and savory snacks made from the bounty of Vancouver Island
- [Westholme teafarm](#) - Canada's only tea farm, blended teas, hand-built ceramics in a funky setting
- Providence Farm - the historical main building was constructed in 1921 as the "Saint Ann's School for Boys", now hosts special events throughout the year. Also visit the garden centre and old fashioned general store.
- Contact the Visitor Centre for a map to the many farms that make our valley unique, including lavender, cranberry, emu and alpaca ranches.

Enjoy a visit to the Marinas

Explore the many bays, coves and marinas in the Cowichan Valley and drink in the vistas of sailboats and yachts and float home villages along its shoreline. Allow the beauty and serenity of the ocean to soothe you.

- [Maple Bay Marina](#)
- Maple Bay Yacht Club
- [Genoa Bay Marina](#)
- Cowichan Bay Marina
- Mill Bay Marina

Explore the Outdoors

Nature abounds! Explore the ocean, forest and mountains and experience the rugged beauty and the flora and fauna in the wild outdoor spaces in the Cowichan Valley

Kayaking - Paddle in the midst of striking mountains, scenic bays and secluded beaches with a possible glimpse at the sea lions sunning themselves or eagles soaring overhead.

- Cowichan Bay Kayaks in Cowichan Bay
- [Wilderness Kayaking](#) in Maple Bay

Scuba Diving - Maple Bay was one of Jacques Cousteau's favourite diving spots!

- Pacific Water Sports

Whale-watching - One of the best tour operators in the business!

- [Ocean Ecoventures](#)

Hiking & Biking

- [Experience Cycling Bike Shop & Repairs](#)
- [Kinsol Trestle](#) - a restored wooden railway trestle over the Koksilah River. Take Shawnigan Lake-Mill Bay Rd for 5 km. Turn right on Shawnigan Lake Rd and soon a left at Renfrew Rd. Continue for 6 km. Turn right on Glen Eagles Rd. The trestle is ½ km hike from the parking lot.

- [Cowichan Valley & Trans-Canada Trail System](#)
- [Nature Cowichan Biking](#)
- [Forest Reserve Hikes](#): Mount Tzouhalem, Maple Mountain, Mount Sicker, Grace Road, Mount Richards, Mount Prevost
- [Cowichan Trail Stewardship Society](#)
- [Cowichan Bay Estuary](#) - for nature-viewing. Bring boots and binoculars and view birds and marine animals in their natural setting.
- [Cowichan River Footpath](#) - this rugged and magnificent 19 km hike is accessible to all. Start at Skutz Falls (to see the fish ladder) or the Fish & Game Club in Glenora. Contact the Visitor Centre for details.
- [Cycle the Shawnigan Lake Loop](#) - a rural ride through small villages with lake and forest views. Paved and off road routes ranging in difficulty from mild to challenging.
- [Bright Angel Park](#) - walk the cable suspension bridge, play on the rope swing over the Koksilah River or BBQ in the picnic grounds.
- [Juan de Fuca Trail](#) - This marine trail is south at China Beach near Jordan River (100 km away), and north on the West Coast Trail near Port Renfrew (100 km away).
- [Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park](#) - this rain forest is home to some of the largest spruce and oldest cedar trees, as well as other wildlife and birds (130 km away).

Bird-watching - There are many opportunities to view local water birds, song birds and raptors

- [Somenos Marsh Conservation Area](#) - this wildlife sanctuary offers a quiet refuge for a variety of birds and animals.
- [Pacific Northwest Raptor Centre](#) - see eagles, hawks, owls and turkey vultures up close or in flight as they soar overhead and show off their aerial agility.
- [Cowichan Bay Estuary](#) - view birds and marine animals in their natural setting.

Sailing - Contact one of the local marinas for information on chartering a boat then enjoy the scenic views of this verdant valley from the vantage point of the glistening ocean.

Fly Fishing - Cowichan River (a heritage river) - purchase a fishing license.

Fishing - Cowichan Lake is also a great place to fish.

Trout Hatchery - Freshwater Eco Centre and Vancouver Island Trout Hatchery - located on the Cowichan River near Trunk Rd. Learn about fish and habitat conservation. Educational for all ages.

Golfing - There are four 18 hole courses and three 9 hole par three courses, and a mini golf course (with go carts!). Contact the Visitor Centre for a list of Golf Courses

Four Wheeling - Bring your ATV atop Mount Prevost to conquer one of the region's rugged peaks.

Hang-Gliding - Contact the Visitor Centre for information about tandem gliding.

Horseback riding - Jump from one of the peaks of Mt Prevost and see the surrounding area from the sky! Contact the Visitor Centre for a list of riding companies, or explore on your own.

Water Skiing - Discover Cowichan Lake or Shawnigan Lake by water ski! - supply your own boat, water skis, tubes and life jackets

Totem Tour in quaint downtown Duncan

Stroll through Duncan's quaint downtown while visiting the 40+ famous totems. Visit the boutique shops in quaint downtown Duncan while you're there!

- Start your self-guided tour on Canada Ave at Station St. and follow the yellow footprints painted on the sidewalk. Most totems are along Canada Ave, Station St and Government St.
- Free guided tours run Tuesday to Saturday from 10 - 4 during summer months.

Train Ride at BC Forest Discovery Centre

Ride a real steam train around the park while you learn about the logging industry in the area. Visit the centre with interactive stations and a display of old logging equipment. Fun for the whole family!

Visit a local Museum or Historical Site

- Train Station Museum, downtown Duncan - this unique, interactive museum is a must for history buffs.
- Koksilah School- the valley's oldest schoolhouse, located just south of Duncan. Phone the Heritage Society or Visitor Centre for open times and tours.
- Whipple Tree Junction - visit the heritage buildings of Duncan's Old China Town, just south of Duncan. Shop for antiques, furniture, gifts, and collectables. Enjoy a lunch or ice cream.
- Cowichan Bay Maritime Museum - see the artifacts of maritime activity in Cowichan Bay.
- View Old Churches - tour the countryside to see Cowichan Station, St Ann's on Tzouhalem Rd, and St Peter's just off Tzouhalem.

Self-guided Artisan Studio Tour

Contact the Visitor Centre for an Artisan tour map to the Artisan Tour - potters, printmakers, painters, weavers, and carvers. See artisans work in their own studios as they conjure up their muses.

Tour the area by Motorcycle or Car

Slow down and take the scenic winding back roads from Mill Bay to Ladysmith or Maple Bay to Genoa Bay as you pass rolling farmland, see glimpses of the ocean and discover small villages and roadside stops.

Daytrip to Saltspring Island

Ride on the 20 minute ride on the Crofton-Vesuvius Ferry on foot, bike, or car. The terminal is located at the end of Chaplin St. in Crofton.