



The Great Hikes of VANCOUVER

The Top **10** Must-Do Hikes around
Vancouver, British Columbia

BY KARL WOLL

— The Great Hikes Of —

Vancouver

The Top Ten Must-Do Hikes Around Vancouver,
British Columbia

Karl Woll



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Thank You

The Great Hikes of Vancouver
2nd Edition
Copyright: Karl Woll
Published: 28th July 2013
Revised: 11th January 2017
ISBN: 9781301736300
PDF Version (Preview)

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Hiking, by its nature, has inherent risks, and you are responsible for your own safety while traveling in the backcountry or any trail described herein. It is the sole responsibility of the reader to determine his or her fitness levels or those of his or her party. Readers also hold sole responsibility to be aware of and alert to changes that might have occurred to trails since the research and writing of this eBook.

Dedicated to my son Evan,
whom I look forward to sharing many hikes with

“

How can you explain that you need to know that the trees are still there, and the hills and the sky? Anyone knows they are. How can you say it's time your pulse responded to another rhythm, the rhythm of the day and the season instead of the hour and the minute? No, you cannot explain. So you walk.

- The Walk

”

One

Hiking in Vancouver

Many people travel to Vancouver for the shopping, restaurants, and ocean scenery and don't realize the spectacular hiking opportunities that exist so close to the city.

A quick jump over the Lions Gate Bridge from downtown Vancouver takes you onto the 'North Shore'. Here, you can find quick access to countless miles of trails buried within lush forests, and sweeping panoramic vistas atop numerous mountains. Heading further north, along the Sea to Sky Highway, takes you to Squamish, Whistler, and Pemberton - areas which offer dozens of the most brilliant summits you can scale in a day-trip. This area north of Vancouver alone would take years of hiking to begin to explore. But, in case that's not enough for you, just head east of Vancouver into the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, and Chilliwack are just a few cities within reach that offer more gorgeous peaks. Each region offering its own unique topography, experience and adventure.

We won't be able to cover all these areas in this book, but we will explore ten of the most exciting hikes near Vancouver.

What Makes Them The ‘Great’ Hikes?

This is subjective, but after hiking in Vancouver over the last decade, I've failed to come across anyone who does not enjoy the hikes listed in this book. They are known as the classics among locals. The hikes in this book were chosen because they a) have easy access to the trailhead, b) span a variety of areas around Vancouver, c) offer diversity in difficulty and seasonal availability and, d) offer great hiking experiences, with the most beautiful views Vancouver has to offer. These are the trails I find myself being drawn back to time and time again.

Using This eBook

This book will guide you through the best hikes within close proximity to the city of Vancouver proper. Each hike has a difficulty rating; either moderate or difficult. Sorry, no easy walks here! Moderate hikes have relatively less elevation gain, and can be completed in a shorter duration than difficult hikes. Difficult hikes offer big climbs with lots of elevation gain and technical terrain, requiring a full day's effort. Generally, difficult hikes should not be undertaken by young children or novice hikers.

The hikes in this book can all be reached within a two and a half hour drive from Vancouver, and are located in Pemberton, Squamish, West Vancouver, North Vancouver and Anmore. The ‘Estimated Driving Time from Vancouver’ provided for each hike is measured from downtown Vancouver and can vary depending on the exact route you take to reach the trailhead and assumes you are traveling by car.

Each hike has a link to a Google Map with driving directions from Vancouver, alongside the printed directions. Most of these hikes are accessible by public transit as well. A link to the Translink website is provided in the Resources section so you can see current bus routes and times.

All the hikes are out-and-back hikes (you return on the same path as you take to the summit), with the exception of Howe Sound Crest Trail, which is a point-to-point hike (meaning your hike ends at a different location than where you start). For the out-and-back hikes, the distances offered for each hike are measured from the trailhead to the summit, and then back to the trailhead. Distances, even when provided to a fraction of a kilometer, are only rough estimates.

The listed elevation gain is the simple math of the difference in the starting elevation and the summit, in meters. It is not a cumulative calculation of the total elevation gained during the hike. This means you are often climbing more than the listed elevation.

The completion times of the hikes are estimates and will vary per individual ability and weather conditions. Once you have done a few hikes from this eBook you can use them as a guideline to estimate your personal time to complete a hike. The times offered, however, are meant to be generous. Individuals with a lot of hiking experience and good fitness should be able to finish the hikes easily within the estimated times provided.

Each hike has a corresponding season when the trail is most likely to be in good condition. However, as the snowfall and snowmelt vary each year, these too, are estimates.

It is best to confirm the current trail conditions before heading out. There are some websites listed in the Resources section at the back of this book which can help.

There are some external resources linked to throughout this book. Links have a tendency to change or break from time to time. If you click a link and it doesn't load or doesn't work as expected, go here: bestvancouverhikes.com/resources.

I'll use that page to keep track of any changes between revisions to the book.

If at any point while reading this guide you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I can easily be reached on Twitter (@karlwoll) or on email (karl@bestvancouverhikes.com). This eBook is also a living document that is revised over time. If there's anything you think that can be done to improve the book, please let me know! Your reviews are also encouraged at the online bookstore you purchased from, as they will help others discover the eBook.

One last point I'd like to make before jumping into the content is this - southwest British Columbia is a beautiful corner of the world. Please do your part to keep the natural environment pristine. In other words: 'Tread lightly, take only pictures, leave only footprints, kill only time'.

I hope you enjoy the book, and your time spent outdoors!

Safety

The hikes described in this eBook are all on well-known and well-marked trails. Still, safety precautions must be undertaken, especially if you are new to hiking in British Columbia.

Each year in the province of British Columbia there are over 1,000 search and rescue missions initiated. That is more than all the other Canadian provinces *combined*. Most of these missions are necessary because of a lack of preparation by those heading into the backcountry. Vancouver is a beautiful city where you can enjoy some spectacular hiking, but please be cautious and prepared before heading out. Do not be fooled by your proximity to civilization. Once you step into the backcountry, you are truly on your own.

The safety information provided here is a basic overview of outdoor precautions. Hands-on experience is ultimately the best way to make sure you are ready for the outdoors, and your best bet is to take a few courses. Avalanche safety training, wilderness first aid, wilderness survival, and orienteering are a few courses you can take. These courses equip you with important skills for your time in the wilderness. Not only do these courses prepare you for the outdoors, but they are fun in themselves!

Before heading out on any hike you should realize the unexpected can occur on your trip. This includes sudden weather changes, injuries, getting lost, and wildlife attacks. For this reason, you must always hike with the Ten Essentials (see the next chapter on Hiking Gear for more details). It is also a good idea to fill out a Trip Plan and leave it with someone you trust. This way someone knows when to expect your return and can provide important details to authorities if you don't return.

A link to an online Trip Plan template is provided in the Resources section.

Before leaving for your hike, it is a good idea to check the weather forecast, marine tide tables, and/ or avalanche warnings, depending on the nature of your trip. For the hikes outlined in this book, if you are hiking in the recommended months, checking the weather will most likely be enough. Snow levels can vary greatly from year-to-year, however, and you should be aware of trail conditions before leaving.

Bears and Cougars

Bears and cougars are the biggest wildlife threat while hiking in British Columbia. Sightings are fairly rare, and attacks are extremely rare but they can happen. It is possible to encounter these animals on any of the hiking trails described in this book. Below are safety guidelines and tips for preventing incidents and dealing with attacks. There is no one 'correct' way to defend against wildlife attacks. The advice offered below is generally accepted but you may receive different advice from other sources.

Bear Safety

Like most wildlife, bears are naturally afraid of humans. Attacks are most common in situations where:

- They are protecting their young or food
- They are startled or feel threatened by you
- They.... {Safety info, etc removed from preview copy}

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Part

Two

The Hikes

Ask yourself these questions before you head out:

- Does someone know where I am going and when to expect me back?
- What is the weather forecast?
- Do I need to be aware of the tides, sunset time or other factors?
- Am I prepared if I get stranded overnight?
- Are my cell phone, headlamp, and other electronics fully charged – Do I have extra batteries for any of these?

Now that you are fully prepared for your adventure, *let's get to the fun stuff!*

Please note: The hikes are listed geographically north to south, west to east, and are not ranked in order of preference.

Hike One: Joffre Lakes



The beautifully turquoise Middle Joffre Lake

Hike Summary

- Rating: Moderate
- Distance: 10 km
- Elevation Gain: 400 m
- Highest Point: 1,600 m
- Time Needed: 4 - 5 hours
- Type: Out-and-back
- Season: June to September
- Dogs Allowed: Yes
- Est. Driving Time from Vancouver: 2.5 hours
- Trailhead
Coords: N50.369517, W-122.498688

Joffre Lakes is a popular hike located just north of Pemberton in Joffre Lakes Provincial Park. Easy trailhead access and gorgeous views make this a busy and well-traveled trail during the summer. It is also a popular destination for ice climbers during the winter months for the same reasons.

Joffre Lakes offers a little bit of everything you could want in a day hike. At 10 km, the hike to Joffre Lakes not too long, but with a steady uphill climb and several technical sections, it still offers a challenge. There are three turquoise, glacier-fed lakes, each more spectacular than the last. The lakes are aptly named Lower, Middle and Upper Joffre Lakes. Along the way, you are also rewarded with creek crossings, a waterfall, and several **viewpoints of the surrounding mountain range. Finally, there's the scenery** at the top, an up close view of the Matier Glacier and a rugged campsite for those wanting to spend the night.

Since 2013, a lot of trail maintenance has been done on the Joffre Lakes Trail – to mixed reviews. From the trailhead to Middle Joffre Lake, the trail is a groomed, dirt path, including the section which used to require scrambling over the moraine field. Steps have been placed in sections, and the trail takes a slightly different route than before in parts. The improvements have made it possible to reach Upper Joffre Lake faster than before, and the route is slightly shorter (closer to 10 km than the often advertised 11 km).

Starting your hike in Joffre Lakes Provincial Park

From the trailhead, easily located from the parking lot, the Joffre Lakes hike is a 5 km upward climb through old growth forest of hemlock and spruce, over a boulder field, past the Lower and Middle Lakes and over Joffre Creek to the Upper Lake.

Starting your hike, Lower Joffre Lake is a flat 5-minute walk and a quick diversion off the main trail. Lower Joffre Lake sits at an elevation of 1,240 m. The view from Lower Lake will give you a good vantage point of your end goal; the spectacular Matier Glacier that looms high above Upper Joffre Lake.

Quickly doubling back from the Lower Lake viewpoint will take you onto the main trail that leads to the Middle and Upper Joffre Lakes. You'll initially be walking on {Removed from preview copy}

Directions

Take the Sea to Sky highway north past Whistler to Pemberton. At the Pemberton Junction (Petro Canada gas station) follow the signs that take you bearing right, towards Mount Currie. After about 7km you will turn right on Duffey Lake Road. Once on Duffey Lake Road, you will wind up on paved road for about 21 km before seeing the signs for the Joffre Lakes Provincial Park parking lot. The trail starts right from parking lot.

Additional Information:

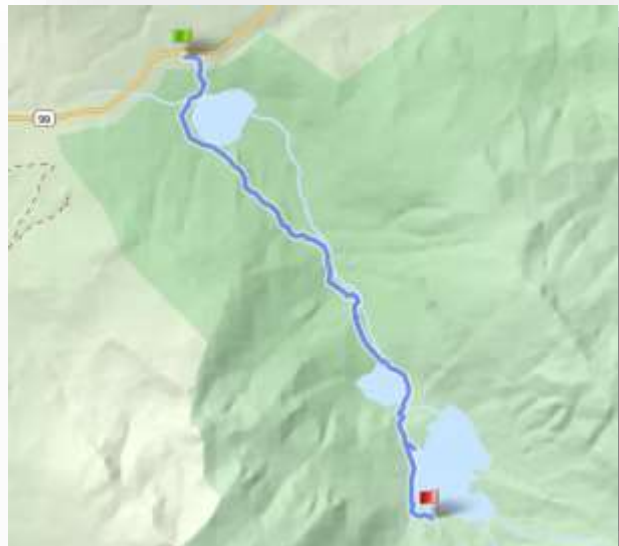
<http://bit.ly/joffrelakes>

Hiking Trail Map:

<http://bit.ly/joffretrailmap>

Google Map to Trailhead:

<http://bit.ly/joffremap>



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Preview



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amazing new hikes today at
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