



**NORTH AMERICAN  
SOCIAL  
MARKETING  
CONFERENCE**

**IGNITED BY  
SPARKS**

# MY VICTORIA

**At the last biannual SMANA conference, cards were placed on every table. Each card listed the names of different cities where the next conference might be held, and attendees were asked to check off their preferred location.**



Many of the names were familiar, such as Las Vegas. One was not, Victoria. Being from Victoria, I used my plenary address to rectify that and began my talk by showing photos of the remarkable place that I call home.

I am so pleased that attendees at the last conference voted to come to Victoria in 2026 and that you will have the chance to experience what many Canadians consider our most beautiful city. I hope that what follows will help you to enjoy your visit to the fullest.

## **Doug McKenzie-Mohr**

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NASMC 2026 Committee Member*

# Restaurants

There are numerous good places to eat in Victoria. Here are several restaurants that I would recommend – most of which are within walking distance of the conference hotel. Given their popularity, I would encourage you to make reservations in advance of traveling to Victoria.

**Café Brio** (Italian) is the restaurant my wife and I chose most often to celebrate special events. Great food and very friendly staff. They often have very interesting cocktails.

On a clear day, the **Snug (Pub)** has an incredible view of Mount Baker. The restaurant is right on the water and has an outdoor seating area. You will need to catch a ride to the Snug from the conference hotel. One of the advantages of eating at the Snug is that it is a five-minute walk along the water to the best place in Victoria to get ice cream (Parachute on Windsor)!

**Il Terrazzo** (Italian) has wonderful food. If you are making a reservation, ask to be seated near one of the several fireplaces for ambiance.

**Ithaka** (Greek) is a family restaurant with great food and friendly staff.

In my opinion, the best place to get brunch in Victoria is **Nourish**. It's about a fifteen-minute walk from the conference hotel. If you go, make sure you try their Golden Sunrise drink—you will thank me afterward!

Another popular brunch spot is the **Jam Café**. It is very popular, so plan to get there just as it opens. The walls in this restaurant are adorned with Canadiana.

Named after one of Dr. Seuss's most popular children's books, **Red Fish, Blue Fish** is a very popular food truck located next to the Victoria Inner Harbor. It is about a ten-minute walk from the conference hotel.

A short distance from the hotel is the **Tourist Wine Bar** (no reservations, show up at 5:00 pm when they open to get a table and say hello to the tallest person in the restaurant – Guy Fergusson – who is the owner and a close friend). Guy is remarkably knowledgeable about wine. Over the holidays, he came over for dinner and spent 30 minutes describing to us why he had brought a particular bottle of wine! Tourist is a small restaurant and is always packed.



# Places to Walk or Run

Directly in front of the conference hotel is a boardwalk that snakes along the shoreline for several kilometers – it's a nice place for a morning or evening walk or run. However, make sure that you cross the bridge in front of the hotel to visit downtown Victoria and the inner harbor. A short distance from the inner harbor that defines downtown Victoria is Fisherman's Wharf. It's a fun place to walk to in the evening.

There is a large park a short distance from downtown Victoria, called Beacon Hill. You can get to Beacon Hill by walking past the legislature toward the intersection of Douglas and Southgate. Walk through the park and then along Dallas Road back toward the hotel.

## Hiking & Beaches

About 35 minutes by car from the hotel is Gowlland Tod Provincial Park. My favorite hike there is to Jocelyn Hill. It has remarkable views of the Saanich Inlet. If you are willing to go farther afield, I cannot recommend highly enough doing the Aylard Farm hike (so named because it starts at Aylard Farm). This hike hugs the rugged coastline and has beautiful views of the Olympic Mountains. Expect to see sea lions and petroglyphs! It is about a 50-minute drive from the hotel. If you are planning to do the Aylard Farm hike, consider combining it with a visit to several of the beaches north of Sooke (there are seven in total). Each beach has its own character, but all are breathtaking. The three closest beaches are French, China, and Sandcut. If you time it well, Sandcut at low tide is simply wonderful! While visiting the beaches, stop at Shirley Delicious for lunch or a snack.

## Other Fare

Downtown Victoria is home to some great bookstores. Munro Books is named after the famous author, Alice Munro, who lived in Victoria. She was the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature for her short stories. Russell Books is a huge used bookstore where you can easily lose an afternoon. A ten-minute walk from the hotel is the Royal British Columbia Museum. Fortunately, it does not whitewash the treatment of indigenous cultures in the province.

Victoria is also home to the world-famous Butchart Gardens. If you go, give yourself a couple of hours to properly enjoy your time there. Many visitors to Victoria book whale-watching tours that leave from the inner harbor. However, there are significant concerns regarding the impact that these tours have on marine life.

**I hope that you found these suggestions helpful, and I look forward to seeing you in Victoria!**