



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM **AOL Travel.**

ENTER 

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Adventure Activities in Whistler - Try if You Dare](#) - AOL Travel News

Adventure Activities in Whistler - Try if You Dare

by **Ava Chisling, an AOL Travel Contributor**

Posted Oct 20th 2010 06:01 PM



Getty Images

Strap yourself in, ladies and gentlemen, and let us push you off this ledge. No, not bungee jumping but [zip-lining](#), a rather new adventure to Canadians, where people zip along, suspended from steel cables, far above the ground. To get a sense of what you will be doing, imagine a long steep gondola ride, but instead of sitting comfortably inside, you're outside, attached to the wire. Zip lines are life lines in many parts of the world and serve as quick and cheap ways for villagers to travel between mountain communities.

Here in mountain playground country, however, we do it just for fun. Choose the company according to where you want to glide. You can zip over forests and rivers, in rugged or less-rugged terrain. While it is true you just sit there as you zip along, we warn you this is not for the weak. A typical zip trek can go on for hours, and you can zip year-round.

Ziptrek Ecotours

Located inside the Carleton Lodge, across from the gondolas

Whistler, British Columbia, Canada V0N1B0

604-935-0001

866-935-0001

<http://www.ziptrek.com/whistler-canada/tours>

1. Zip-Lining

2. The Longest Run

In order to succeed at this adventure, you first have to demonstrate a love of burnt stew. Thankfully, you will not have to eat the stew but ski on it, as Burnt Stew is the first leg of the longest ski and snowboard run of your life. Imagine riding to [the top of Whistler](#) on a glorious sunny day. In this daring Whistler activity, expansive snow-peaked mountains surround you. And for an incredible 11 kilometers (seven miles) you ski/snowboard (and perhaps fall) down the side of one of the world's greatest mountains. That is like skiing from the Brooklyn Bridge to Central Park in New York City, but on a slope with jumps, moguls and crisp clean air.

3. Tommy Africa's

So, when was the last time you were surrounded by go-go dancers? We thought so. Whistler dare ideas like this will help you update your dance moves since you last hustled your way onto the club floor. It will also remind you of why you chose a party town for your vacation. [Tommy Africa's](#), located right in Whistler Village, is the place to dance, enjoy a drink or two, and watch the (young) world pass you by. Mirrored disco balls, guest DJs and a whole lot of après-ski craziness is what you'll find here. It's best to just give in.

Tommy Africa's

4216 Gateway Dr

Whistler, BC V0N 1B4 Canada

604-932-6090

<http://www.tommyafricas.com/>

Nightly 10PM-2AM

4. Dog-Sledding

If you have ever dreamed of shouting mush-mush to a pack of dogs as you glide through the forest, this is your chance. Tourists come from the world over to give [dog-sledding](#) a try in the Canadian wilderness. There is something about the silence, freedom and simplicity of this adventure that makes it one of the most memorable outdoor activities Whistler has to offer. Professional guides help you along and you can choose fancy trips that include meals or bring your own. This is really unlike anything you can experience back home. You can enjoy sledding in summer and winter, one being slightly more comfortable than the other.

5. Spin Cycle Human Gyroscope

While it sounds like we made up this adventure, we assure you it really exists. Located within the aptly named [Adventure Zone](#), this little gadget is what NASA uses to simulate space travel to astronauts. Strapped inside a giant ball, you and a friend will be turned around and around, head over heels, until you change your mind about ever wanting to head into space. Very highly recommend you gyro first and eat later. And if spinning on your head is not your thing, try the flying trapeze nearby, yet another great adventure activity in Whistler.

Blackcomb Base Adventure Zone

4545 Blackcomb Way



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM

AOL Travel.

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Toronto Mythbusters - AOL Travel News](#)

Toronto Mythbusters

by **Ava Chisling, an AOL Travel Contributor**
Posted Oct 19th 2010 05:51 PM



Getty Images

and wealthy neighborhoods. However, if you are arriving from anywhere else, you may find things less than stellar. The Toronto garbage strike in 2009, which lasted an incredible six weeks in the blazing summer heat, shattered two myths about Toronto at the same time: one, that it is really clean, and two, that things mostly work. For that stinky period, neither held true, and it changed how many viewed this sprawling city of more than 5.5 million people.

Just about all the myths surrounding Toronto are about the city itself. Known around the world as a friendly, neat and clean city, the question remains, "Is any of it really true?" This is a case for Toronto mythbusters!

1. Toronto the Clean

Is Toronto one of the cleanest cities in the world? Or is this an urban myth? It depends on where you come from. If you arrive from a very big city, then you may find Toronto neat and orderly, with its mostly straight streets

2. Toronto the Cold

Will you freeze if you visit outside the summer months? Well, maybe! It is no Toronto urban legend that Canada is cold in the wintertime, even in southern Canada where Toronto is located. But there is warmth, too. And the snow melts, terraces open up and outdoor concerts begin. Head to [Yonge-Dundas Square](#), a copycat of New York City's Times Square or London's Oxford Circus – or at least it tries to be – where you will find concerts, lectures, film festivals and gatherings of all sorts. Yes, those happen in the summer, but there are always shopping malls and movie theaters for those chilly days and nights.

Yonge-Dundas Square
2 Carlton St, Ste 620
Toronto, ON M5B 1J3 Canada
416-979-9960
<http://www.ydsquare.ca/>

3. Toronto the Good

Toronto has a worldwide reputation of being nice and safe. But is it? The obvious has to be stated here: compared to American cities, Toronto is exceptionally safe. And compared to other Canadian cities, it is also among the safest per capita. Having said that, in recent years there have been increasing incidents of gang and gun violence, and there are parts of town where you would not want to walk alone at night, Jane and Finch being one of them. So is it Toronto the Good? It really depends on where you go and how much fun you want to have. See a live show at [Lee's Palace](#) and report back to us.

Lee's Palace/The Dance Cave
529 Boor St
W Toronto, Canada
416-532-1598
<http://www.leespalace.com/>
Times and prices vary

4. Everyone Hates Toronto

If you think "everyone hates Toronto" is a grandiose and unkind statement, you would only be half right. There is such a strong anti-Toronto feeling in Canada that they made a movie about it called, unsurprisingly, *Let's All Hate Toronto*. The reason for this national hatred is because Toronto is the financial capital of Canada, so the 26 million Canadians who do not live there feel the city attracts greedy money-grabbers. It also has a reputation for being cold and bleak, and we don't mean the weather. But the truth is that Toronto is also the cultural capital of Canada. It has the best concerts, the best exhibitions – the best of just about everything because it has the population and the money to support them. So, does everyone hate Toronto? It's probably not just a Toronto urban myth, but not for the right reasons.

5. Toronto Closes Early

The classic joke about Toronto is that you have to drink quickly because at any minute, the bartender will grab your glass and close the bar. It's true that Toronto bars close earlier than its archrival and nemesis, Montreal, but how many times are you sitting around a bar at 1AM or 2AM thinking "Oh, I really need another two hours to finish this drink." So, it is true that Toronto has a bedtime? Yes. But does it affect the quality of the nightlife? No. Another complaint dispelled by the Toronto mythbusters.

6. Toronto is Grey and Dull

Toronto has a reputation of being a dark, grey place, mostly due to the number of businesspeople that wander the streets of downtown in bland suits, or sit on public transit like robots. This wave of grey/dark colors does permeate the city during certain hours and in certain neighborhoods, but Toronto is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, diverse city with large populations of people who wouldn't be caught dead in a dark suit. Head to Chinatown, Liberty Village, Queen Street East or parts of Ossington. You'll see plenty of interesting things that are not the least bit grey.

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM

AOL Travel.

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Toronto Slang - AOL Travel News](#)

Toronto Slang

by **Ava Chisling, an AOL Travel Contributor**

Posted Oct 19th 2010 05:52 PM



Getty Images

You will hear some pretty strange phrases when you visit Toronto, but rest assured they are entirely normal to the locals. For example, you may be asked to find the closest Green P or how you feel about the crazy Crystal. You may also "GO" places and discover your own "PATH" along the way. Confused by this Toronto slang? Here's help:

1. The Ex

"The Ex" is Toronto local language for CNE, which is short for the Canadian National Exhibition. An annual pilgrimage of sorts, this amusement park/carnival/fun place pops up every August for close to three weeks, and it's been amusing Torontonians since 1879. The Ex is a mish-mash of performers, rides, restaurants, parades and a farm. In other words, everything and anything. Exhibition Place, where the Ex is held, is open throughout the year. You can catch sporting events or visit its large park area.

Canadian National Exhibition
Press Building, Exhibition Place, 210 Prince's Blvd
Toronto, ON M6K 3C3 Canada
416-263-3800
<http://www.theex.com/>

2. The Argos

"The Argos," according to local lingo, is Toronto's beloved football team, The [Toronto Argonauts](#). Pronounced "Are-Goes," this city goes crazy for their white and blue team. Don't confuse Canadian football with American football, as they are not the same game. Yes, they both run on a big field carrying pigskin, but the rules and the pace are different. Catch a game from June through November and hear the "Argooooos" chant.

3. Where They're At

If you live in a big city, chances are you refer to your neighborhood first and the actual city second when describing your hometown. So, usually people say they are from the Bronx, New York or South Beach, Miami or Camden Town, London. However, if you live in Toronto, you are more likely to refer to a cross-section of streets than your actual neighborhood. So Torontonians say they live on "Yonge and St. Clair" or "Bay and Bloor." This quirk is particular to Toronto, as few other Canadian cities we know of use street corners as personal geographical references.

4. Green P

Telling someone to find the "Green P" is going to sound funny no matter where you are. But according to Toronto slang, a Green P is a parking lot and it's an important phrase to remember in a city where it is near impossible to find a convenient parking space on the street. Green Ps are run by the Toronto Parking Authority and are located all around town. They are easily found by looking for the big signs containing ... wait for it ... a large white P. Gotcha on that one!

5. The Crystal

Everybody has an opinion on "The Crystal", the monstrous, lavish, ultra-modern and expensive extension to the Royal Ontario Museum. Short for "Michael Lee-Chin Crystal," the structure is made up of giant pieces of aluminum and glass, and geometric shapes that jut out into and above the street like something blew up on the inside and left them nowhere else to go. You can see this building from miles away, so no need to ask for directions. The good news is that there are millions of pieces of art inside.

Michael Lee-Chin Crystal
100 Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M5S 2C6 Canada
416-586-8000
<http://www.rom.on.ca/crystal/structure.php>
Mon-Thu 10AM-5:30PM, Fri 10AM-9:30PM, Sat-Sun 10AM-5:30PM
Prices vary

6. GO!

If someone tells you to GO, it is not a call to action but rather Toronto local lingo for a place to sit. Train and buses, to be precise. The GO network is the name of the Toronto (and beyond) interregional transport network that most often gets the folks of this ever-expanding city to and from work.

7. PATH

By the same token, if someone tells you to take the nearest "path," they are not offering you spiritual advice. PATH is a winter escape pod for cold Torontonians and visitors. Well, it's not a pod, exactly, but a seemingly endless series of underground walkways that lead you through malls, office buildings, tourist attractions and so on.



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM **AOL Travel.**

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Adventure Activities in Vancouver - Try if You Dare](#) - AOL Travel News

Adventure Activities in Vancouver - Try if You Dare

by **Ava Chisling**, an AOL Travel Contributor

Posted Oct 19th 2010 05:59 PM



Getty Images

Vancouver is a true West Coast city, with all the adventures, sport and Pacific influences that make it a great place to try something new. Sure you can paraglide, rock climb, scuba dive and dine on blowfish in the same day, but let's see what else is on tap. For an adventure activity in Vancouver, here are our suggestions for the most daring among you:

1. Red Red Wine

Not all Vancouver dare ideas require great physical strength or a measure of craziness. For this one, all you

Lumière
2551 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC
604-739-8186
<http://www.lumiere.ca/>
Wed-Sun 5:30PM-10PM, Thu-Sat 5:30PM-11PM

2. Kiteboarding

Know how to fly a kite? Know how to swim? Excellent. At least one of those skills will help you kiteboard, and it's not the part about the kite. With names like Bandit and Slingshot – and that's just the equipment – you know this Vancouver adventurous sport is not for grandma. In short, you hang onto a parachute (the kite) for dear life and wait for it to pull you across the ocean – or the snow – while you stand, flip and twist on a surfboard. There are many spots around Vancouver to try the sport, although kitesurfing is not allowed at Jericho Beach. Stop by [Airtime Boardsports](#) for some info and help with equipment. You can also tie a four-wheeled buggy to the kite and give that a go.

Airtime Boardsports
3671 W 4th Ave
Vancouver, BC Canada V6R1P2
604-734-9463
<http://airtimeboardsports.com/ZenCart/>
Seasonal hours

3. Orcas and Kayaks

Since Vancouver is right on the sea, many of the sports in this region involve water in one way or another. Fancy an adventure activity in Vancouver that includes chasing a killer whale with your kayak? You can, if you're crazy enough, but the more-sane adventurer will be satisfied with paddling nearby. There are many tours that take visitors by kayak to see the orcas – and you can get pretty close to them if you're brave enough. You can spend a few days camping and kayaking, or head out for only the day. Either way, your encounter with the whales and possibly sea lions, seals and dolphins, will be memorable. There is no need to be in top physical condition or have experience kayaking, but we suggest you practice your back-paddling for when the killer whales appear before you.

4. Wilderness Survival

If you are tired of typical tourist adventure activities in Vancouver like ferry rides and visits to the aquarium, try adding some brain and brawn to your trip. Register for a two-and-a-half day course in wilderness survival at [Canada West Mountain School](#), which includes an evening of classroom training and two days in the field. And by field, we mean forest, where you will learn how to build a shelter, make fire and deal with emergencies. This is a great way to meet new people and increase your chances of appearing on reality shows like Survivor. No tribal council for you! Equipment can be rented at various locations, including the [Mountain Equipment Co-Op](#).

Canada West Mountain School
47 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1P1 Canada
604-878-7007, 800-892-2266
<http://www.themountainschool.com/hiking-survival.html#4>

Mountain Equipment Co-Op
130 West Broadway
Vancouver, British Columbia V5Y 1P3 Canada
888-847-0770, 604-876-6221
<http://www.mec.ca/Main/home.jsp>

Mon-Wed 10AM-7PM, Thu-Fri 10AM-9PM, Sat 9AM-6PM, Sun 11AM-5PM

5. Grouse Grind

Although it sounds like some kind of meat dish, the Grouse Grind is actually an extremely popular trail up [Grouse Mountain](#). Located minutes away from downtown Vancouver, the challenge here is not only the very steep trail, but also how fast you can complete it. The bane of many Vancouverites' existence, running up this trail with blazing speed is a sport unto itself.

The Grind is 1.8 miles long (2.9 kilometers) and can take two hours to complete if you're not in great shape. If you fancy yourself as a bit of an adventurer, time your climb/run against everyone else. The fastest time recorded is 25:01 for men and 31:04 for women. With a 56-percent slope, we suggest you bring lots of sports drinks with you. And maybe a defibrillator. North Vancouver is easily accessible by car or by public transit. Grouse Mountain is open every day year-round, without exception.

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM **AOL Travel.**

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [5 Best Photo Opportunities in Vancouver](#) - AOL Travel News

5 Best Photo Opportunities in Vancouver

by **Ava Chisling**, an AOL Travel Contributor
Posted Oct 19th 2010 05:59 PM



If you weren't breathing in the fresh sea air or the cool mountain air of Vancouver, you would think you were on a movie set. This is a city with everything: the beach, the sea, jagged mountain peaks, skyscrapers, beautiful suspension bridges and visiting cruise ships. With this kind of natural beauty, the only way to take a bad photograph is to forget to take the lens cap off. Here are some of the best photo opportunities Vancouver has to offer:

1. Romantic Spot: Helicopter Ride

Lee Van Grack

Do you have 30 minutes to spare? And would you like to spend them soaring above scenic [Vancouver in a helicopter](#)? If so, then scrub up and grab your camera because this is the most romantic place to photograph the city. Take the tour early in your stay, as not only will you see the sites from the most dramatic perspective possible, it will help you get your bearings for the rest of the trip. Note that the more people who come along for the ride, the cheaper it will be. A ride can cost anywhere from \$250 to \$500. Expensive, yes, but think of the Vancouver travel photography on your wall!

Ejet Aviation, Inc
Ste 187, 505-8840n 210th St
Langley, BC, Canada V1M 2Y2 Canada
778-294-4354
http://www.ejet.ca/index.php?section_id=adventu&subitem_id=van_helitour
Rates vary

2. Quirky Spot: Vancouver Bridges

The subject of your quirky spot photograph is located outside of Vancouver, but is worth finding a bridge to capture it from afar. Snow-capped Mount Baker stands at 11,000 feet, and although it actually sits in Washington State, it is dominant enough to loom over downtown Vancouver on sunny days. Keep your wits about you for this shot, as it requires the crossing of one of Vancouver's expansive bridges and snapping as you hit the midway point. We recommend that you rent a bicycle for the journey, but you have to know what you're doing – both with the bike and the camera. Not crashing is paramount, but once you get the image, you'll be happy you risked life and limb to get there. Find a bridge, a bike and a sunny day for one of Vancouver's best photo ops. You will thank us later.

3. Fun Family Spot: Beaches

For a relatively big city, Vancouver has some accessible, fun and family-friendly beaches. For this photo, you will need to set your camera on a high speed because there will be plenty of action around you. Kayakers, windsurfers, volleyball players, joggers – everything you would expect on Southern California's Venice Beach, you will find here. [Jericho Beach](#) and [Spanish Bank](#) are among the best known for landscape photography. [Wreck Beach](#) is also well regarded, but welcomes nudity. Beware!

4. Scenic Spot: View from North Vancouver

The truth is, just about everywhere in Vancouver is scenic. One good way to capture the entire cityscape is to take the SeaBus across the Burrard Inlet to North Vancouver and simply turn around and face downtown. The trip takes 12 minutes and is especially impressive at night. Shoot both ways: to North Vancouver and then on the way back to the city. If you are lucky enough to be in town over a holiday, like Canada Day on July 1, you can also shoot the massive fireworks display from North Vancouver.

SeaBus
Waterfront terminal in downtown Vancouver and Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver
<http://triplanning.translink.bc.ca/hiwire?a=iScheduleLookupSearch&LineName=998&LineAbbr=998>
Hours vary; departs every 15 minutes in the daytime, every 30 minutes in the evening
Prices vary

5. Classic Spot: Stanley Park

[Stanley Park](#) is to Vancouver what Central Park is to New York. It is the heart and soul and lungs of the city, and it has been since 1887. It is here that you can photograph people walking and biking along the seawall. You can shoot landmarks such as Prospect Point, totem poles, Hollow Tree and Beaver Lake, and capture the beauty of nature as it was hundreds of years ago. You can still find absolute silence here if you take the right trail and leave at the right time (early morning, not on weekends). So tackle these photo opportunities Vancouver has to offer. Then hang the wonderful prints on your walls at home and remember your great photography adventure!

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM

AOL Travel.

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Whistler Mythbusters](#) - AOL Travel News

Whistler Mythbusters

by **Ava Chisling**, an AOL Travel Contributor
Posted Oct 20th 2010 06:01 AM



Getty Images

If you ask people what they think of Whistler, they will tell you it is beautiful, but not affordable. These mountains have been playgrounds for the rich and famous for decades, and playing host to the 2010 Winter Olympics only pushed the prices further skyward. Is this town only for the adventure hounds, the young and the wealthy? Let's see what Whistler mythbusters have to say.

1. If you come to Whistler, you must ski or snowboard.

TRUE – to an extent. If you come to a ski resort, you better love the cold and the snow. Well, at least that is how the myth goes. Whistler-Blackcomb is renowned as one of the best ski resorts in the world. Beautifully groomed trails, steep elevations, and state of the art lifts are only three of the 100 reasons people come here to ski and snowboard. So while there are things to do in the area that do not involve the mountains – going to a spa, for example – it's probably best that you at least give the outdoors a try. Maybe you don't have to ski or snowboard, but what about ice skating or skate-skiing? One way or another, you will want to put the hot chocolate down and get some exercise outdoors.

2. Whistler is only for the young.

FALSE. Of course, resort towns cater to the young in many ways! This is a mountain playground – a place to party. Well, that is kind of a Whistler urban myth. Though in a lot of ways, the myth holds true. This is a place that caters to the young, much like South Beach in Miami. Teenage boarders and skiers come from all over the world to spend weeks and months on these slopes. You can see them in line during the day as they wait for a ride up and you can see them on line at night as they wait, with flashy clothes and already buzzed on alcohol, to get into the clubs. "Ride hard, play hard" is the motto of many in Whistler. Of course, there are things for older people to enjoy as well. There are fine restaurants and upscale shops that do not attract a noisy young crowd. But to experience the real Whistler, you should at least be young at heart and do some shredding of your own.

3. Whistler is only for the rich.

FALSE, though it is expensive. Similar to resort towns like Aspen or Vail, Whistler does attract a rich and famous crowd. Seal, Ashton and Demi, Justin Timberlake, Sarah Jessica Parker ... all the big Hollywood and European names come here for the day and nightlife. Let's look at some prices to see if this myth is true. First, there is a ski pass. A two-day adult pass can cost as much as CDN \$182. Of course, there are combination passes, flexi passes, book-in-advance passes, etc., that bring the daily cost down but no matter how you look at it, it's not cheap. A one week's stay at the Chateau Whistler in mid-January will run you roughly \$2,100 and up. Equipment rental, food, transport to and from Whistler, and an "I Love Canada" T-shirt, and you can expect a hefty bill at the end of your stay. Now, having just affirmed this Whistler urban myth, it is also true that you can stay at a bed and breakfast, ski only once and eat at McDonalds, but clearly it is not the same experience.

4. Whistler is like the TV show.

FALSE. Was the TV drama Whistler a reflection of life in the real town of the same name? It's doubtful. The award-winning television show, which ran for a few years on various North American stations, was all about lies, power and control, with cheesy taglines like "What new secrets lie hidden beneath the snow? The truth is hard to find. In Whistler it's just about impossible." We're pretty sure it's actually possible to find the secrets beneath the snow, waiting for summer to arrive being the most obvious way. The show focused on pretty people finding themselves, and sometimes used the real Whistler as its backdrop. The only person who believed the show was based on any kind of reality is real-life Canadian Olympic gold medalist Ross Rebagliati. He threatened to sue the TV show's producers for misappropriation of his personality for commercial gain and defamation in 2006. They eventually settled the case out of court, incredibly.

5. The only time to visit Whistler is in winter.

FALSE. Whistler has a reputation of being a world-class winter resort probably because it is. However, there is more than one season in this part of Canada, so don't dismiss summer as a viable option to visit. The same chairlifts that carry skiers and bikers to the peaks in the winter take hikers and bikers in the summer. Relax in one of the mountain-top restaurants, surrounded by snow-covered mountains on all sides. Take a bike up and ride switch-back all the way down, through the trees, all the while mindful of bears. You can also swim, kayak, canoe and otherwise enjoy pristine lakes.

That's the truth according to Whistler mythbusters! Visit soon for exciting outdoor fun.

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM **AOL Travel.**

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [5 Best Photo Opportunities in Whistler](#) - AOL Travel News

5 Best Photo Opportunities in Whistler

by **Ava Chisling**, an AOL Travel Contributor
Posted Oct 20th 2010 06:02 AM



Lee Van Grack

Whistler

Perhaps it sounds a bit cliché to say so, but everywhere is a best photo op in Whistler. You don't even have to be on top of the mountain to catch extraordinary beauty. There is the river, the lakes, the trails, the village, the whacky colors of the boarders and the skiers. So while the little town of Whistler may be man-made to attract the tourists, especially since it hosted the 2010 Winter Olympics, all the natural beauty around you is worth documenting. Take advantage of photo opportunities Whistler offers – and shoot wide.

1. Romantic Spot: The Fairmont Chateau

Grandiose, palatial, old-world – there are 100 ways to describe [The Fairmont Chateau Whistler](#) landmark hotel, and it makes for spectacular photographs. While the hotel is located at the base of Blackcomb Mountain, with an ideal Whistler photography landscape, it is really the interior space that makes this the most romantic spot to shoot. There are sophisticated wine rooms and cozy lounges with fireplaces, a wellness spa and markets, stone pillars and grand dining rooms. It's one of the most beautiful locations on the planet, and you don't even have to step outside to capture it. Ideal if you can stay here and photograph the hotel as people from the world over pass on by.

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler
4599 Chateau Blvd
Whistler, BC V0N 1B4 Canada
604-938-8000
800-606-8244
<http://www.fairmont.com/whistler>

2. Quirky Spot: Bear Tour

Yes. You read right. A **bear tour**. As in black furry things that can eat you and your camera in a blink of an eye. However, if you take one of the organized tours here, chances are pretty good you will not be eaten and you will come home with some rather original photographs. There is no walking or hiking involved, for obvious reasons. On this tour you sit in a truck and are driven on trails where you are likely to find bears. If Yogi doesn't happen to make an appearance, there are plenty of other creatures to shoot, including coyotes, hawks and deer. Organized tours are offered between May and October. Before and after, you are on your own.

3. Fun Family Spot: Rainbow Park

Rainbow Park is one of those places that make you sigh when you arrive. It is lakeside, surrounded by mountain peaks, on a well-marked hiking/biking trail system, with all the facilities you and your family would want for a fun, safe day out. Make sure you have enough memory in your camera because you will want to shoot your kids running on the beach, splashing in the water, in a canoe and enjoying a picnic. So unleash the young and let them explore. There are washrooms and changing rooms, so the family can bring swimwear and beachwear. This is Whistler travel photography at its best!

4. Scenic Spot

Of course the most scenic spot in the Whistler area is from atop the mountains themselves. There are more than 30 ways to get to the tops of both [Whistler](#) and [Blackcomb](#) mountains. While a few hundred feet won't make much difference in your photographs, the spectacular, expansive views of the region will be wonderful. Try to get as high up as possible, just to say you did. Take the Peak Express to the top of Whistler, where there are 360-degree views. It is quite literally hard to know where to shoot first. If you have never tried panorama shooting on your camera, this is the place to give it a go.

5. Classic Spot

While the most scenic spot to take photographs is atop Whistler-Blackcomb, the classic place to shoot is on the way up and on the way down from the peaks. Take the relatively short Peak 2 Peak ride between the sister mountains for 360-degree views all around. Shoot from one of the 30-plus lifts, using your feet as the foreground for your mountain range backdrop photos. (Don't be shy. We all do it.) There is something otherworldly about being transported hundreds of meters above the ground, zipping from peak to peak and place to place, in silence. Spending the day on the mountain can be both intoxicating and overwhelming. Take your time and don't miss any photo opportunities Whistler affords.

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM

AOL Travel.

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Toronto with Kids: A Perfect Family Day](#) - AOL Travel News

Toronto with Kids: A Perfect Family Day

by [Ava Chisling](#), an AOL Travel Contributor

Posted Oct 20th 2010 05:51 PM



Alamy
family vacation to Toronto.

The perfect day in Toronto with kids requires a whole lot of energy, so it is good to get an early start. You and your family will participate in some classic activities, ones that hundreds of thousands of Canadian children have experienced before you. This includes placing your hand on the big metal ball at the Science Centre – or watching someone else do it, if you are too scared – and saying "No!" to the kids as they roam in and out of the stores at The Eaton Centre, one of the city's main tourist attractions. In between, you'll eat at child-friendly restaurants with strange names and perhaps tumble down a water slide, ice cream in hand. Best get going. There are only so many hours in a day for your best

Morning

There is nothing like a sugar rush to get kids going in the morning and this is the place to get it. OK, so it is a little cheesy to dig into eggs and bacon at a place called [Pickle Barrel](#), but we've all been through it and you should too. They have a kid's menu but, really, everything at this popular chain is kid-friendly: the decor, the desserts, and the meals themselves. You can [choose the best location online](#) and reserve a table if you like. Treat the kids to a milkshake if they are especially well behaved. If not, pour more fruit onto their plates – you can usually substitute bad food for good food at no charge.

After breakfast, head to [Eaton Centre](#). There are not many cities of more than 5 million people that can boast a plain old shopping mall as one of its leading tourist attractions, but this is the case in Toronto. At one point or another, you will be visiting the Eaton Centre. It is arguably the reference point for downtown Toronto. And let's be honest. It's just a mall. But it is great for the family because there is The Gap, Banana Republic, game stores and sport stores. True, most of its stores can be found elsewhere in the city. But, if you're with the kids, the Eaton Centre is big, busy, and noisy, so you will fit right in and they will have plenty of things to do, look at and buy.

Eaton Centre
220 Yonge St
Toronto, ON M5B 2H1 Canada
416-598-8560
<http://www.torontoeatoncentre.com/en/Pages/default.aspx>
Mon-Fri 10AM-9PM, Sat 9:30AM-7PM, Sun 11AM-6PM

Afternoon

If you are in Toronto during the summer months – and the chances are more than likely that you will be – then [Canada's Wonderland](#) is a must for the kids. Located north of the city, it is easily reached by public transport, so there is no need to brave the busy highways. As the name suggests, this is an amusement park with all the usual bells and whistles: splash park, live shows for the kids, rides and lots of junk food. You can easily spend the entire afternoon here, mingling with your kids' favorite cartoon characters, but exactly how much cotton candy and ride-spinning can the family endure? Half a day is perfect. Arrive early to avoid the lines. This is truly one of the best Toronto family vacation ideas!

Canada's Wonderland
9580 Jane St
Vaughan, ON L6A 1S6 Canada
905-832-8131
<http://www.canadaswonderland.com>
Hours vary
\$19.99 & up

Next, it's time for some educational fun. There is hardly a child in Eastern Canada whose hair has not stood straight up at the [Ontario Science Centre](#). Literally. It is here where we were told to place our little hands on a giant metal sphere and then a few seconds later ... zap! We were hit with enough static electricity to make our hair stand up, much to the amusement of the crowd. Known as the Van de Graaff generator, this is where the parents usually want to head first for old time's sake. Just about everything at the Science Centre is meant to be touched. The little ones will love the cave walls and the rainforest exhibits, and try getting them out of KidSpark, where kids eight and under are encouraged to splash, create and poke a range of contraptions. The Centre is a "must do" when visiting Toronto with kids.

Ontario Science Centre
770 Don Mills Road (at the corner of Eglinton Avenue East)
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
416-696-1000, 888-696-1110
<http://www.ontariosciencecentre.ca>
Daily 10AM-5PM
Prices vary

Evening

For the evening, this pasta-centric eatery may be an international chain, but it's also a local tradition. Children have loved the [Old Spaghetti Factory](#) for much of the past four decades. They love the chicken dippers, cheesy sticks and, not surprisingly, lots of spaghetti dishes. This longtime family favorite is located within walking distance of most major hotels. It is the perfect place to wind down after an exhausting day – and there are salads and other healthy fare available if the kids are completely carbed-out! There are more trendy places than this to enjoy a meal, but why mess with a classic? This Toronto favorite is kid-friendly with decent food and close to where you need to be at the end of a very long day.

The Old Spaghetti Factory

56 The Esplanade

Toronto, ON Canada

416-864-9761

<http://oldspaghettifactory.net>

Sun-Thu 11:30AM-10PM, Fri-Sat 11:30AM-11PM

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM **AOL Travel.**

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [5 Best Photo Opportunities in Toronto](#) - AOL Travel News

5 Best Photo Opportunities in Toronto

by [Ava Chisling](#), an AOL Travel Contributor
Posted Oct 20th 2010 05:52 PM



Lee Van Grack

Toronto has everything you want in a photogenic city. It has a long shoreline with lapping waves. It has the iconic CN tower that looms over a giant egg-shaped stadium. There are plenty of interactive tourist attractions to shoot by day, and wide straight streets with all the bright lights and bustle to shoot at night. Canada's largest city sure is pretty. Photo opportunities Toronto affords abound, and now all you have to do is capture them.

1. Romantic Spot: Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel

If you want a romantic spot to take a photo of Toronto, then book a room at the [Renaissance Downtown Hotel](#). Choose the right room (we chose #478), pull back the drapes, and be prepared to have your breath stolen. Your hotel room is located inside a huge stadium –the [Rogers Centre](#) – where the Toronto Blue Jays and the Canadian Football League play, as well as the NFL, and every major recording artist who comes to town. Now we are not suggesting you take unauthorized photos of these events, but the stadium itself is pretty interesting and you can capture it while in your pajamas, splurging on a \$5 mini-bar Coke. What could be more romantic than that?

Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel
One Blue Jays Way
Toronto, ON M5V 1J4 Canada
416-341-7100, 800-237-1512
<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/yyzbr-renaissance-toronto-downtown-hotel/>

2. Quirky Spot: Toronto Zoo

Let's face it. Everyone loves babies, especially when they are furry and scurry on four legs. The [Toronto Zoo](#) is one of the best photo ops in Toronto for shooting such memorable subjects as a Malayan tapir, the Mandarin duck (no, not the kind you wear on your shoulder) and the central bearded dragon. There are plenty of places where you can get close enough to take some real wildlife shots and if you're sneaky enough, you can pretend your series of white-headed vulture shots had you running for cover. Located outside the city center, for obvious reasons, the zoo is reachable by public transport. There are also loads of indoor exhibits to shoot if the weather doesn't cooperate.

Toronto Zoo
361A Old Finch Ave
Toronto, ON M1B 5K7 Canada
416-392-5929
Daily 9:30AM-4:30PM
Adults \$23, seniors \$17, children 4-12 \$13

3. Fun Family Spot: Hockey Hall of Fame

If you think Canadians are all about ice hockey, you are absolutely right. It is impossible to visit Toronto, even in the summertime, and not hear about the famous (or hapless) Leafs, depending on who is doing the talking. Think "Chicago Cubs" and you will get the general idea of what the Maple Leafs are all about. Thankfully, the [Hockey Hall of Fame](#) covers all the teams, from the Habs (Montreal) to the Canucks (Vancouver). You can take your best photo in Toronto of the kids playing interactive games, standing in replica hockey dressing rooms and ogling hockey's great icons, like the Stanley Cup.

Hockey Hall of Fame
Brookfield Place
30 Yonge St
Toronto, Canada, M5E 1X8
416-360-7765
www.hhof.com
Mon-Sat 9:30AM-6PM, Sun 10AM-6PM
Adults \$15, seniors \$12, children 4-13 \$10, children 3 & under free

4. Scenic Spot: The Islands

Just about all Toronto travel photography is taken from [the islands](#). Well, not always on the islands, but near them, from the water or the air or anywhere else you can fit the CN Tower into the frame. The islands are a short hop from downtown and provide all kinds of opportunities for fun shots. In the summer, you'll find boaters and volleyball players, hikers and bikers. In the other seasons, the air is crisp and clean, so the downtown skyline is often bathed in bright blue sky. Easily accessible by ferry, located at Bay Street and Queens Quay.

5. Classic Spot: CN Tower

Yes, riding to the top of the [CN Tower](#) is a classic place to take photos, and doing so is as stereotypical as visiting the Eiffel Tower or the Empire State Building. But as photo opportunities Toronto is known for, it has to be

done. For the top of a skinny tower, there are a lot of places to shoot from. There is an observation deck, of course, but also a Skypod (33 stories higher than the deck) and a glass floor. Not for the faint-hearted but great for panoramic photos.

CN Tower
301 Front St
W Toronto, ON Canada
416-868-5937
www.cntower.ca
Daily 9AM-10PM

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on Seed.com.



**YOU COULD WIN
A DISNEY CRUISE**

FROM **AOL Travel.**

ENTER

©Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas CST1022229-50

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Vancouver Mythbusters - AOL Travel News](#)

Vancouver Mythbusters

by **Ava Chisling**, an AOL Travel Contributor

Posted Oct 20th 2010 05:59 PM



Getty Images

The myths surrounding Vancouver are as contradictory as the city itself, and are ripe for Vancouver mythbusters to tackle. It is at once beautiful, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and hugged by a rugged coastline, and boring. It is the most livable city in the world, and at the same time, the least affordable. So which myths are true and which are Vancouver urban legend? Here is the fact from the fiction:

1. It always rains in Vancouver.

FALSE. Vancouver has been known as a rainy West Coast city since there has been a Vancouver. Similar to its neighbor Seattle's reputation, people think it is darker than it really is on the Pacific Coast of North America. So here are the facts. According to the Weather Network, using data over the course of 30 years, Vancouver has a lot of rain in the winter months. It can rain roughly 50 percent of the time (if you watched the rainy 2010 Winter Olympics, you will know this is true) – with little rain in the summer months. The myth about Vancouver's rain comes mostly from its long stretches of dark and dreary days, but over the course of one year, some say it is actually the second driest city in Canada. Vancouver urban myth busted.

2. Vancouver is the most livable city in the world.

TRUE and FALSE. Vancouver is often listed in the top three of the world's most livable cities based on education, recreation, safety and health care, among other criteria. In 2010, The Economist listed it as No. 1. So is Vancouver very livable? It sure is if you don't mind sleeping outside. Vancouver is among the most expensive cities in the world to buy a home. In fact, it has been ranked at the top in some surveys. To give you a sense of the problem consider that the average house sells for more than \$540,000, and the average household income is just under \$60,000. So while healthcare is virtually free and the cost of education is relatively low, it is very expensive to find and pay for a home whether you buy or rent. Perhaps listing Vancouver as the "most visitable" is more suitable; it is better to come and go than to hang around.

3. Vancouver is Hollywood North.

TRUE and FALSE. Vancouver has long been called "Hollywood North" because many American production companies come to the area to shoot movies and TV shows – Twilight: New Moon, Juno, Hot Tub Time Machine – to name just three. The problem with this myth is that Toronto is also called "Hollywood North," attracting just as many American A-listers as the West Coast, and proudly showing them off in their famous annual film festival. So which city is the real deal? Sometimes both. Sometimes neither. It depends on the value of the Canadian dollar, called the loonie. When the loonie is low, companies race to Canada because both cities offer high-quality production at very competitive prices. However, when the loonie is nearly equal to the American dollar, it makes little sense to pack up the whole team and move north. So this Vancouver urban myth is true. But only when it makes economic sense.

4. Vancouver is "No Fun City."

TRUE – sort of. Is it possible that a city with mountains, the sea and beautiful parks could be no fun at all? If you believe urban myths it is. Vancouver has been known as "No Fun City" for so long that documentaries have been made on the subject. And in August 2010, the respected national literary magazine, The Walrus, published an article called "Return to No Fun City," which didn't help matters. So where does this myth come from? It is derived mostly from the city's restrictions on the number of new bars and live venues allowed to open, its tight alcohol laws and because the city's lower-income artsy neighborhoods are being knocked down and rebuilt by developers looking for higher rent and "better quality tenants." Is Vancouver really no fun? If you're young, the answer is most likely yes.

5. Vancouver is Asia West.

Vancouver has more in common with Hong Kong than it does with Canada's capital, Ottawa, Ontario. That is the myth, and in a way, it is true. Geographically, Vancouver is located farther from the east coast of its own country than it is from Honolulu, Hawaii, so you can see why it has developed a population and a culture all its own. Although many believe the Asian influence in Vancouver started with the mass influx of Hong Kong residents when China took over that country, Asians have been coming to the Canadian west since the gold rush days of the 19th century. Today Vancouver has the highest number of Asian residents than any other city in North America. This has led to excellent Asian-influenced restaurants, theater, art and architecture.

Hopefully these Vancouver mythbusters have dispelled some false notions about our fair city.

If you are interested in contributing to AOL Travel, join our network of writers and check out travel assignments on [Seed.com](#).