

Romance

in the
Air

FIND HEAT IN THE WINTER'S COLD WITH THESE MADE-IN-BC ROMANTIC GETAWAYS.

BY HOLLY MUNN



Mount Washington is a great place to warm up winter with a romantic spark.

Winter isn't the first season to jump to mind when you think of romance. But that loving feeling comes easily after a walk in the fresh cool air with hands that need warming, with a long night ahead.

Certainly Valentine's Day is the traditional day for chocolate and flowers, but why not make candlelight dinners and long kisses a habit through the wind and snow? Venus, the goddess of love blessed British Columbia with a host of options for lovebirds looking for weekend escapes. Ice skating on ponds, enjoying a gourmet dinner after a day on the water or on the slopes makes for a perfect prelude to romance.

Fire and Ice

If you and your partner are into high-adrenaline sports then downhill skiing may be just the thing to rev up your love life on and off the slopes. But if you don't get your kicks from high-flying action,

you can still make a trip to one of BC's great snow resorts. In addition to the traditional downhill thrills, you'll find some great snowshoeing trails or cross-country routes with warming huts to take care of those cold hands. At night, curl up in front of a fireplace or kiss in the hot tub before tucking in for a long winter's rest.

Whistler is a traditional ski destination for Vancouverites. Here you'll find great shopping, first-class accommodation and a swinging nightlife. But if you'd like to get away from the rush and madness of Whistler, Pacific Coastal Airlines also offers some great ski packages in conjunction with four Fernie and Kimberly alpine resorts that include transfers, skiing and accommodation. Here you'll find fantastic powder without the lineups of more popular destinations. For Vancouver Island snowbunnies, make the drive to Mount Washington, just a quick drive from Comox Airport. Here you'll also find great skiing,

snowboarding and snowshoeing with accommodation and without the crowds. Romance can bloom in the snow after all.

Cityscapes

You don't need to get away from it all to make music together. BC's big cities of Vancouver and Victoria can be a romantic's paradise.

Vancouver a romantic mecca? Certainly. In the daylight, hold hands and check out the world-class shopping on Robson Street. Stop at the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory for some chocolate delights or, if you're a bit more daring head to La Senza a bit farther down Robson for some chocolate-flavoured body paint. Grab some great cheese and wine on Granville Island for a picnic in your room or warm up in the back of a horse-drawn carriage around Stanley Park.

At night, if you want to leave your room, Vancouver comes alive. Go for a candlelight

dinner at Bin 941 on Dave, explore the huge wine list at Lumière, or watch the sunset at the Sequoia Grill in Stanley Park. If you have room to indulge after dinner go to The Fleuri Restaurant at the Sutton Place Hotel for the famous chocoholic buffet. With over 20 chocolate-y items on the menu, you'll be in the mood for love once you roll out of the restaurant.

After dinner, you can cuddle into a room to suit any budget, from a quaint bed and breakfast to a luxury suite at the Pan Pacific hotel with roses, champagne and a late check-out, in case you want to stay inside just a bit longer.

Tea for Two

Likewise, Victoria offers great shopping and horse-drawn carriage rides with a view of the harbour and parliament buildings. If you are looking for something old-fashioned and elegant, try high tea for two. Finger sandwiches, scones, china cups and, of course, great tea, can be found at a few locations in the city, most notably at the landmark Fairmont Empress Hotel, built by Francis Rattenbury and completed in 1908. The Empress serves high tea to 75,000 guests annually with full silver service. Reservations are a must for this special treat.

Another great escape in the city can be found at Victoria's Amore by the Sea. This oceanfront bed and breakfast offers his and her spa packages and side-by-side massages with an ocean view. If you want to make your partnership permanent this romance-themed spot with a private beach also has elopement packages. Diamonds and wedding rings can be a girl's best friend.

Fishing for Love

Bringing in the big one doesn't have to mean diamond rings, what about a tyee-class chinook to take home for future candlelit dinners? The Queen Charlotte Islands offer a host of luxury fishing lodges, with the emphasis on luxury and the big early-run chinook start entering the area in mid-February, just in time for Valentine's Day. Five-star lodgings aren't uncommon with spas, hot tubs and roaring fireplaces almost mandatory.

Gourmet dinners are par for the course and a trip on the water rigged up with the latest fishing gear is a great way to spend some quality time together. When the chinook aren't running, you can go to the rivers for some great steelhead fishing, or to the open ocean for rockfish or halibut. Places like the West Coast Fishing Club also offer the chance to hire a private helicopter to go to a secluded beach where romantic couples might like to "sightsee."



The weather outside might be frightful, but watching it from a luxury suite on Vancouver Island's west coast is truly delightful.

Cupid's Storms

Staying out of the wind and rain is a sensible thing to do, but what better way to stoke your heart's desire than to cuddle up and watch the sea rage against the wind and rain onshore? Why go out when you can watch the action from a warm room? So the idea of storm watching on Vancouver Island's west coast was born, easily accessible by car from the Victoria, Comox or Campbell River airports.

Resorts such as the Wickaninnish Inn in Tofino offer storm-watching packages with an oceanfront room. If you dare take the chance to walk, arm in arm, down deserted beaches while waves three metres high roll in and crash against the shore. Many hotels provide appropriate raingear if your own umbrella isn't up to the challenge. If you're looking for luxury, you'll also find some of the resorts offer spas with all possible treatments to warm, restore, and relax you for a long evening by the fireplace.

Premier Destinations

In 1872, British Columbians elected a premier who changed his name to Amor de Cosmos, or "Lover of the Universe." Perhaps they saw then that BC was made for lovers, with a little imagination and these handy Pacific Coastal Airlines destinations any pair can find a cosy spot to cuddle up in. 

