



# COWICHAN: LOCALLY GROWN; LOCALLY MADE

## **Fall Spots in Cowichan**

There's something special about fall. The shorter days, and longer nights have people seeking relaxing experiences, while the crisp, fresh air also makes us want to get outside and soak up the golden autumn sunshine.

Fall in Cowichan is no different. The bright reds and golden yellows of the farmland and hillsides glow, while the mist that settles along the ocean and in the valley give off a mystical vibe.

### **Cowichan Bay:**

The village is located beneath the bay's constant overseer, Mount Tzouhalem and is close to the tidal flats where two major rivers flow into the sea: The Cowichan and Koksilah. The village became a gateway for lumber exports and a thriving hub for commercial and sports fishing. Many of the buildings are still on stilts, and is now a mosaic of restaurants, cafes, funky boutiques and ecotourism operators.

Stop into True Grain Bread and Wildcoast Perfumery or take a relaxing lunch at Rock Cod Cafe for some fresh, local seafood. Grab a coffee and head down to the docks where you can see hundreds of sea lions from Washington and California relaxing in the bay well into December.

### **Ladysmith:**

This seaside town is chock full of restored heritage buildings – vestiges of a frontier past financed by coal and lumber.

The downtown core is also home to a wide variety of shops, boutiques, bookstores, antique dealers and more eateries than you can shake a stick at. Spend a Saturday perusing the shops with a coffee and a famous cinnamon bun from Old Town Bakery, or stop for dinner at Plantitue, Ladysmith's only vegan restaurant, or Maya Norte, a Spanish-Mexican fusion restaurant.

A walking tour of Ladysmith's heritage route will take you past the heritage artifacts lining First Avenue and then ultimately to the Waterfront Art Gallery and BC's only floating museum.

### **Chemainus:**

The town of Chemainus put itself on the map in the 80s with its historic mural project, which has helped foster a thriving arts scene.

Stroll the quaint downtown streets and be sure to check out Willow Street Antique Mall, featuring over 25 dealers from across Vancouver Island. Hansel and Gretel Candy Co. down the street offers unique candies from around the world, with a charming garden in the back. Ma Maison is the perfect place to stop for lunch or dinner after a full day of exploring, where Chef Lauren Cartmel specializes in west coast fusion fare.

### **Lake Cowichan:**

Further west, as you head towards the stunning forests of Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park, you'll find Lake Cowichan. The popular Cowichan Valley Trail will take you through the town and back through Somenos and along the way, you can stop in at some of the most scenic spots in the region, including Skutz Falls, and the Cowichan River Trail.

Cowichan River, a BC Heritage River, is the best place for fly fishing in the fall and winter months for trout. Check out VI Fly Fishing for custom fly fishing excursions or a relaxing half-day float down the river to take in the gorgeous colours along the banks and spot some wildlife who call the shores home!

Whether you're new to the region or have lived in Cowichan your whole life, exploring your own backyard and supporting local businesses can uncover new favourite spots. Locally grown, and locally made.