

Victoria's Best Restaurants

As selected by NHPCA member and Victoria resident, Dacia Moss

Victoria has many fabulous restaurants. The ones below are some of my personal favourites. Really just a small selection of what's available. These are all within walking distance (or a short cab ride) from the Victoria Convention Center where our Whole Health Conference is taking place. Enjoy!

The Top Three

ZAMBRI'S– www.zambris.ca awarded the Gold prize as "Best in Victoria 2010" by Vancouver Magazine and Bronze in EAT Magazine's 2010 Contest "Who has the Best Food in Victoria" plus the Gold for "Most Inspiring Local Chef". Peter Zambri is the chef and his sister Jo runs the front of house. Excellent Italian trattoria fare. Rustic and full of flavour with no pretensions. They will be moving from their current location into the Atrium Building in September and should be well settled in by the end of October. My personal favourite is the lunchtime array (usually 10 different varieties) of fresh grilled and prepared vegetables. \$3.50 for a generous serving. Pasta to die for. Open weekdays for lunch and dinner. Saturday dinner only. Closed Sunday. Atrium Building, 820 Yates at Blanchard 250-360-1171.

CAFÉ BRIO -- www.cafe-brio.com/ won Silver in EAT Magazine's 2010 Contest "Who has the Best Food in Victoria" and Bronze for "Best Farm-to Table Cooking (Use of Local Ingredients)" Café Brio pride themselves on their fabulous use of the freshest seasonal ingredients and their amazing BC wine cellar. They offer two sizes of plates for just about everything on their menu so you can afford to sample a variety of appetizers, and entrees. 944 Fort St. between Quadra and Vancouver. Open 7 nights a week for dinner only. Call for reservations 250-383-0009.

BRASSERIE L'ECOLE – www.lecole.ca/ Deserves top honours winning the Gold in EAT Magazine's 2010 Contest "Who has the Best Food in Victoria". This is excellent French bistro fare, perfectly prepared with the freshest local ingredients. Dinner only Tuesday through Saturday. They do not take reservations. So to be sure of a seat, people line up outside the doors for their 5:30 p.m. opening. Or come later. They serve until 10:00 p.m. 1715 Government St. near Fisgard 250-475-6260.

Good Casual Food

DEVOUR – <http://www.devour.ca/devour.html> My personal favourite lunch spot. Chefs Alison Bigg and Jena Stewart serve an amazing constantly changing menu from the city's tiniest kitchen. The whole place is only 500 sq. ft. with maybe 12 seats. Recently sampled Shredded Orange-Chili Duck in Buckwheat Crepes served with green salad for \$12. Yum! Excellent salads that combine grains, nuts, veggies and some form of protein over organic mixed greens. Take out also available. Lunch only. 762 Broughton St. near Blanchard 250-590-3231

HERNANDEZ COCINA - <http://www.hernandezcocina.com/> homemade authentic Mexican food. Tacos 5 for \$5.00 served with fresh lime and cilantro. Delicious! 735 Yates Street in the Atrium between Yates and View Streets. 250-884-5313

PIG BBQ JOINT – <http://pigbbqjoint.com/> A local favourite for pulled pork, BBQ Brisket with all the fixin's. Atrium Building, 820 Yates at Blanshard. 250-381-4677

PINK BICYCLE – <http://www.pinkbicycleburger.com/> Hankering for a burger? The Pink Bicycle is the place! And not just beef burgers, either. 1008 Blanshard St. between Fort and Broughton 250-384-1008

RED FISH BLUE FISH – www.redfish-bluefish.com/ a unique Victoria dining experience. The kitchen is in a shipping container. Eat at picnic tables on the wharf. Not recommended on a really wet day. Excellent fish and chips and their specialty, Fish Tacones, yum! 1006 Wharf St. on the right side of the Inner Harbour when your back is to the Empress Hotel. 250 298-6877

Best Breakfast Places

BLUE FOX CAFÉ – Always busy. The first thing you'll notice about the Blue Fox is the line-up. Don't be deterred. People wait happily because the food is so good. Great versions of all the usual breakfast favourites but with a twist. My personal favourite is the Huevos Rancheros with pulled pork, hash browns, salsa and guacamole. Enough to share. 919 Fort St. north of Quadra 250-380-1683

JOHN'S PLACE – www.johnsplace.ca/ "Real food at real prices". Local handout serving breakfast and brunch for more than 20 years. Friendly and cheerful staff, many of whom have been there since the beginning will make you feel at home. Big omelets, French toast and many versions of eggs benny. 723 Pandora Ave. at Douglas Street 250-389-0711

Brewpubs and Gastropubs

Victoria is home to some of the finest microbreweries anywhere. Check out Phillips, Vancouver Island, Lighthouse and Driftwood brews.

SWAN'S – www.swanshotel.com/pub.php One of the oldest hotels in the historic part of Victoria. Now owned by the University of Victoria, this hotel houses one of the best collections of Canadian art on the west coast. Worth a visit just for that. They brew their own beers and offer seasonal specials like Pumpkin ale. Food is basic pub fare. 506 Pandora Ave. at Store Street 250-361-3310

THE IRISH TIMES GASTROPUB – www.irishtimespub.ca/ Contemporary takes on traditional Irish food and drink. Open 7 days a week from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Live music every evening. No cover. Good honest pub fare with daily lunch specials. 1200 Government St. @View Street 250-383-7775

CANOE BREWPUB – www.canoebrewpub.com/ A bit further away but worth the visit. Award winning hand crafted beers and extensive wine list. Features local seasonal and organic food. Located in an historic building at waterfront level 450 Swift St. below Store Street beyond Swan's opposite side of the street 250-361-1940

THE BARD AND BANKER GASTROPUB – www.bardandbanker.com/ Victoria's newest "landmark pub" located in an old bank on the corner of Fort Street. 30 beers on tap and very good food. Sampled on a recent visit Seafood sliders with salad and pulled pork balls (much better than they sound). Often have appetizer specials in the late afternoon. 1022 Government St. at Fort 250-953-9993

Italian

ZAMBRI'S – www.zambris.ca See the Top Three above. Atrium Building, 820 Yates at Blanshard. 250-360-1171

IL TERRAZZO – www.ilterrazzo.com/ Even though you are inside the atmosphere is like a patio in Italy. Lovely room. Wood fired meats and pizza, wide selection of Italian specialties. 555 Johnson St. at Store Street 250-361-0028

PAGLIACCI'S – www.pagliaccis.ca/ One of Victoria's perennial favourites. Menu has a jokey Hollywood slant. A little bit goofy but lots of fun. No reservations, be prepared for a wait. 1011 Broad St. at Fort 250-386-1662

Best Pizza in Town

PRIMA STRADA <http://www.pizzeriaprimastrada.com/> Authentic and delicious wood fired Neapolitan Pizza. Excellent local wines by the glass. Homemade gelato for dessert. Prima! No reservations. Worth the wait! 230 Cook Street at Oliphant Avenue 250-590-8595 on the other side of Beacon Hill Park, about a 20-minute walk from the Convention Centre.

World Food

SHIKI SUSHI – [/www.shikisushi.ca/](http://www.shikisushi.ca/) Modern minimalist interior design with fresh modern sushi. Good attentive service. 1113 Blanchard Street at Fort 250-381-3622

SEN ZUSHI – www.senzushi.com/ Where the Japanese consulate bring their guests. Good sushi and selection of standard Japanese offerings. 940 Fort St. 250-385-4320

SOOKJAI THAI – Best Thai food downtown. 839 Fort St. at Quadra 250-383-9945

CEYLON – <http://www.cafeceylon.ca> Classic Sri Lankan and pan-Asian cuisine. Delicious fresh tasting curries and sambals. Chef uses Ayurvedic principles in her cooking. Reservations a must. This sari-decorated room is small. 1175 Cook Street near Fort Street 250-388-4949

Small Plates

THE TAPA BAR – <http://www.tapabar.ca/> Tapas-style menu in a charming restaurant tucked into Trounce alley between Government and Broad Streets 620 Trounce Alley. 250-383-0013

VENETO – www.venetodining.com/ Great bar in a refurbished historic hotel. The kitchen specializes in entrees prepared and presented three different ways on the same plate. Perfect for sharing. 1450 Douglas St. 250-383-7310

VISTA 18 – www.vista18.com/ Great view from the 18th Floor of the Chateau Victoria Hotel. Yummy small plates and nice drinks. 740 Burdett Ave. 250-382-9258

Seafood

FERRIS'S OYSTER BAR & GRILL – www.ferrisoysterbar.com/ Upstairs, great oysters are only the beginning. The menu features imaginative preparation of local seafood. Downstairs serves oysters prepared dozens of different ways and for the molluck-averse, good quality bar food. 536 Yates St. near Government 250-360-1824

PESCATORE'S FISH HOUSE & OYSTER BAR www.pescatores.com/ Upscale, top of the line seafood restaurant. The Oyster Bar is fun and bright with beer on tap and oysters shucked right in the bar. Delicious simple menu of local oysters, steamed clams and mussels and seafood cakes. Check out "Buck a shuck" oyster specials in the late afternoon. 614 Humboldt St. at Government 250-385-4512

Casual Dining

EARL'S – <http://www.earls.ca/> 1199 Government St. 250-381-1866

BROWN'S SOCIAL CLUB – www.brownsrestaurantgroup.com 809 Douglas St. 250-388-0200

High Tea

THE EMPRESS HOTEL (W) – www.fairmont.com/empress/ A Victoria tradition. Very expensive. Elegant service. Tea doesn't get any higher than this. 721 Government St. 866-840-8402

Raw, Vegan, and Vegetarian

REBAR – <http://www.rebarmodernfood.com> Fresh funky healthy food, freshly squeezed juices, stir-fries, fabulous salads, tofu curries, and splendid healthy desserts. And, a good wine list. 50 Bastion Square, corner of View and Langley Streets 250-361-9223

A trio of restaurants worth visiting on lower Pandora Street, west of Government

MO:LÉ – <http://www.molerestaurant.ca> Fresh delicious local and organic creative food. Many vegetarian options but not a strictly vegetarian restaurant. Great breakfast place. Not open for dinner! 545 Pandora 250-385-6653

CAFÉ BLISS – <http://www.cafebliss.ca> Finest fresh food and juices. "100% organic, 100% raw, 100% vegetarian and vegan, 100% wheat and gluten free, 100% fresh and local ingredients, 100% made with love." Worth a visit. 556 Pandora Street 250-590-5733

HABIT - <http://www.habitcoffee.com> They call themselves "Habit, Coffee and Culture". This is a fine popular, alternative coffee bar featuring excellent salads and sandwiches and baked goods. 552 Pandora Street 250-294-1127

Hotel Fine Dining

Upscale offerings for a night on the town

AURA – www.aurarestaurant.ca/ Fine waterfront dining right on the Inner Harbour. Excellent contemporary seafood menu. Located in the Inn at Laurel Point. 680 Montreal St. 250-414-6739

BLUE CRAB BAR & GRILL – <http://bluecrab.ca/> Pacific Northwest cuisine, dynamic seafood offerings. Superb harbour views. Located in the Coast Victoria Harbourside Hotel, 146 Kingston St. 250-480-1999

SHOPPING

A couple of Victoria landmark destinations worth visiting

MONRO'S BOOKS - <http://www.munrobooks.com/> One of the best book stores in Canada located in a fabulous historic building at 1108 Government Street between Fort and View 250-382-2464 Open seven days a week.

ROGER'S CHOCOLATES - <http://www.rogerschocolates.com> A Victoria tradition since 1885, best known for their handmade chocolate creams. Located at 913 Government Street 250-881-8771 Open Sunday to Wednesday 9:30 to 7 p.m. and Thursday to Saturday 9:30 to 9:00 p.m. Closed Monday and Tuesday.