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Celebrate cherry blossom season with these scenic sites

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After a particularly rainy and snowy winter, photographers and arborists alike will finally get a chance to take in the sights this spring.

March 30 marks the beginning of the **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival**, a month-long celebration of the traditional Japanese tree.

And they aren't just a pretty sight here in Vancouver – the trees have a cultural significance as well.

In the early 1930's the mayors of the Japanese cities of Kobe and Yokohama presented the City of Vancouver with 500 cherry blossom trees to plant around a cenotaph honouring Japanese Canadians who served in WWI.

Those trees were some of the first planted at Stanley Park's Japanese monument, a site where cherry blossoms are still found to this day.

Despite a later start this year, the festival still comes with annual events like The Big Picnic under the trees in Queen Elizabeth Park and the Bike the Blossoms group bike ride, all with the aim of showing appreciation for the unique tree.

While a snowy winter has led to later blooming, festival-goers can expect a spring that's almost as white as those cherry blossoms come to maturity in the coming weeks.

They won't last long, though, as cherry blossom trees only tend to bloom for less than a month.

Downtown Vancouver holds the crown for the best place to see those budding blooms in person, but there are hundreds of cherry blossom spots all across Metro Vancouver.

Here are the top 5 places in Metro Vancouver to check out the trees for yourself:

1: Japanese Memorial – Stanley Park

It's the oldest, and still the best – there's more to appreciate than just the view at this historic site.

2: Burrard Skytrain Station – Vancouver

Blooming cherry blossoms make for a picturesque scene at this site in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

3: Nitobe Memorial Garden – UBC

Plenty of great photo opportunities of blooming blossoms in this traditional Japanese garden setting.

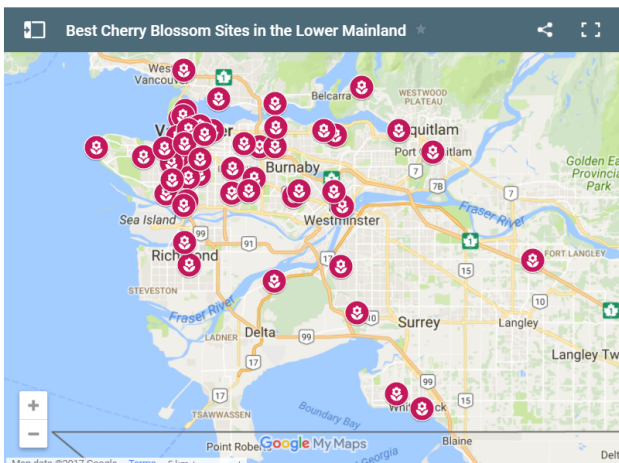
4: SFU/Burnaby Mountain – Burnaby

Though it'll require you to stretch your legs, there are plenty of gorgeous trees across the SFU campus and Burnaby Mountain Park for those willing to make the trek.

5: Queen Elizabeth Park – Vancouver

The park that holds the record for most cherry blossom trees in Metro Vancouver, Queen Elizabeth won't disappoint those looking for a beautiful backdrop.

For all the other great spots across Metro Vancouver, check out the interactive map below.



Story by *Tristan Martin-Woodhouse*

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