

British columbia

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British Columbia is Canada's western border province. At its north are Yukon and the Northwest Territories while its northwestern border is the U. S. State of Alaska.

On its eastern border is another province, Alberta, and on the southern border are the U. S. States of Washington, Idaho, and Montana. It is the third-largest province in Canada and encompasses 9.5 percent of the country's total land area, which makes it around four times the size of Great Britain or more than twice as large as Japan. (Information on BC, 2006, par. 1)

Physical Geography

Topography. British Columbia boasts of great mountains. Its highest peak is Fairweather Mountain which is 4,663 meters high and its lowest is Hallam Peak which is just 3,205 meters high. (Statistics Canada, 2002) Volcanoes also abound in British Columbia although most are dormant. The largest of the seventeen volcanoes is Ruby Mountain and the smallest is called Mount Garibaldi.

Water Forms. The Fraser River is one of the most important means of transportation in British Columbia because it directly flows to the Pacific Ocean. The province's Columbia River is the location of 14 hydroelectric dams which is a major power source for its population. Other rivers that lead to the Pacific Ocean are Skeena and Kootenay while the Peace River drains toward the Arctic Ocean. British Columbia is also the host of many large natural lakes including the Babine, Atlin, Kootenay, Ootsa, and Okanagan. (British Columbia, 2007, p. 1)

Climate

The climate in British Columbia can vary depending on the area's location from the Pacific Ocean and the mountain ranges but the province is known for its mild temperature. Snow rarely falls on the coast even during winter but the interior lands can experience very cold temperatures and snow between the months of November to March.

The warmest days in summer can be experienced in the interior lands, most especially in the south with temperatures that can go further than 30°C while the coast enjoys a temperature range of about 22 to 28°C. (Climate and Weather, n. d., par. 1-4)

Government and Municipalities

British Columbia espouses the parliamentary form of government headed by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the Canadian Governor-General. However, executive power truly emanates from the Premier who comes from the legislative branch because it is the position that appoints 20 ministers to the cabinet that maintains and makes the policies for the province.

British Columbia has the Legislative Assembly (unicameral legislature) which has 79 elected members with five-year terms. British Columbia is also represented by 36 members in Canada's House of Commons and has 6 senators all of whom are appointed by the Governor-General.