

Northwest Coastal People: Their Culture and their Art in the British Columbia Museum

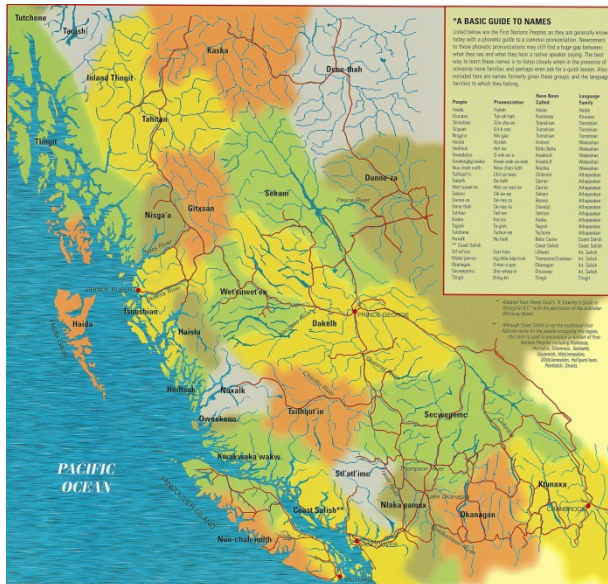
*“When you've reached the edge
of your world, ours begins.”*

During your visit to the [Pacific Northwest Coast](#), Conference 2015 attendees will unquestionably see examples of Aboriginal Art. In the Parks within the city of Victoria and Oak Bay or alongside the coastal highways and small communities, one will find stately towering Totems; some ancient or weather-worn, yet others fresh and colourful, carefully and painstakingly carved from cedar. The Pacific Northwest Coast has numerous exhibits. Not far from our Conference Hotel, attendees have another “MUST SEE” stopover, the British Columbia Museum in Victoria, BC, and just around the corner one can find [Beaconhill Park](#).

The Indigenous Peoples of British Columbia are well known for their creativity on the BC coast. It is here that we find that there are six main peoples or groups. These groups were not tribes, as these people identified only with their village as well as perhaps one or two other ones. While many customs and languages separated these six groups, they all adapted to the coastal rainforest environment in similar ways, sharing a way of life which tamed this rugged and beautiful land. These main groups of First Nations Peoples as well as a brief description of each group:

The way of life of the different Coastal first nations groups were similar because their habitat was the same. As well, much travel up and down the coast meant that useful ideas spread quickly.

Northern Groups: The Tlingit, The Haida, and The Tsimshian: Just south of the land where icebergs float around the sea, lived the Tlingit who built large oceangoing canoes. Nearby, on Haida Gwaii, formerly



the Queen Charlotte Islands lived one of the most widely known native groups, the Haida, who depended entirely on the sea for their livelihood. Here the climate is very wet with violent storms pounding the shoreline. Haida Gwaii is also home to some of the largest red cedar trees in the world. The Haida made canoes from these trees which were highly valued along the coast for their appearance, seaworthiness and size. Haida trading and raiding canoes were up to 75 feet in length and could carry 40 people as well as two tons of trade goods. On the coast, opposite Haida Gwaii, lived the Tsimshian. These three northern groups were united by marriages between villages as well as by great feasts and celebrations.

Southern Groups: The Kwakiutl or Kwakwaka'wakw, The Nootka or Nuu-Chah-Nulth, and The Coast Salish. The Kwakiutl people were fine wood carvers and mask makers and are best known for their

spectacular religious dances. The Coast Salish lived around Puget Sound, near present day Seattle and Vancouver, and built enormous houses in which entire villages of several hundred people lived. The Nootka, who inhabited western Vancouver Island, were the first B.C. Coast natives to come into contact with Europeans. Captain Cook's ship, the Resolution sailed into Nootka Sound in 1778 and was met by Makweena, a Nootka leader. The Nootka are famed whale hunters.

Be sure to visit the [British Columbia Museum TOTEM GALLERY](#) right across the street from the Parliament Buildings. Here also are housed the British Columbia Archives and IMAX Theatre. Be prepared to be amazed!

While in Victoria, be sure to visit the new Exhibit, **Gold Rush! El Dorado in BC** showing from May 13 – October 31, 2015. Catch Gold Fever! In 1858 word of 'gold' rang out in the Fraser Canyon, starting a dramatic movement of people to what were largely unexplored regions of BC.

Through interactive displays and rare artifacts, this fascinating exhibition will show you how everything changed forever with the gold rushes of the 1800s, as class and racial barriers were broken down and people seized the extraordinary opportunities that glittered before them. We delve into the passions roused by the alluring ore and tell this important chapter of history from a strikingly global perspective – the exhibition includes Allure of Gold from the Museo del Oro in Bogota, Colombia.

Address: Royal BC Museum 675 Belleville Street, Victoria BC V8W 9W2 Tel: 250-356-7226
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Internet Websites to browse to plan your visit:

<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/>

<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/first-peoples/>

<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/archives-visitors/>

<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/imax/>

Keep checking the Victoria Branch Web site for upcoming News on Conference 2015

Please visit the Victoria Branch website at
<http://www.uelac.org/uelvictoria/UELAC-Conference-2015-Victoria-BC.htm>

Conference 2015 Planning Committee Victoria, BC

