

EXPLORE



Stopover VANCOUVER

From vegan pizza to squash custard, it's all about plant-based cuisine in this chilled Canadian city

Words ELIZABETH EMERY

1 From little acorns Head to **The Acorn** for vegetarian fine dining. Go early to get a table, then order a round of craft cocktails and dishes such as kelp salt-roasted king oyster mushrooms. If you can't get in, try The Arbor, its younger, more casual spin-off a few doors down. theacornrestaurant.ca

2 Coco gelato The organic coconut-milk-based ices at **Umaluma Gelato** are a must. Try Drunken Cherry, with bourbon-soaked Sicilian cherries and pecans roasted with black pepper and lemon zest; or Panda, a moreish mix of vanilla, chocolate ganache and activated charcoal. umaluma.com

3 Nice slice Fast, delicious and affordable are the operative words at **Virtuous Pie**, a vegan pizza joint with two outlets in the city. Order the Ultraviolet Pizza, with walnuts, arugula pesto, cashew mozzarella, oven-dried tomatoes, kale, caramelised onions and pine nuts, or look out for specials on pizza and beer. virtuouspie.com

4 Hash it out After a morning hike, soaking up Pacific mountain scenery and sea air, refuel at **Heirloom** with mimosas and the signature Heirloom Hash, an energising mix of courgette, heirloom tomatoes, red onion, almond and coriander purée, hash browns and either poached eggs or tofu. heirloomveg.ca

5 Free-from fromage Chef Karen McAthy is an authority on plant-based cheese-making and runs courses on it. If you just want to buy the stuff, head to her shop, **Blue Heron Creamery** (open Saturdays only), for 100% vegan cheeses. Smoke 'n' Spice and almond ricotta are favourites. blueheroncheese.com

6 Lebanese lunch A well-loved Vancouver chain with plenty of vegetarian and vegan options, **Nuba** serves colourful Lebanese dishes in a relaxed but trendy setting. The signature dish is Najib's Special (crispy cauliflower tossed with lemon and sea salt, and accompanied by a dollop of tahini) but it also does well-priced meze-style plates. nuba.ca

7 Comfort cooking The three branches of **Meet** now put vegan twists on comfort food staples: try a double-double burger (with vegan cheese and coconut bacon), or the mac 'n' cheez bowl (macaroni with cashew 'cheez' sauce, 'rawmesan', spring onions and a sprinkle of smoked salt). meetonmain.com

8 Sugar high Seek out **Vegan Pudding & Co's** little hole-in-the-wall storefront to try one of its signature Japanese-style 'custard' puddings. Made from kabocha squash and coconut sugar, they're deliciously creamy and sweet but dairy-free. Flavours include black sesame, matcha and chocolate, but the original vanilla version is the most popular. veganpuddingco.com

9 Vietnamese fusion Family-run **Chau Veggie Express** focusses on fresh, colourful, plant-based dishes at both its branches. Try the Diving for Pearls Broth (with rice noodles, lychee-date broth, organic tofu and kale), or the dairy-free coconut pandan leaf and kale ice cream. chowatchau.ca

10 Tacos and tequila A much-loved Mexican-inspired vegetarian restaurant, **Bandidas Taqueria** makes everything from scratch (including its tortillas). Try Dave's Enchilada, with smoky-sweet chipotle tofu, and a hibiscus tequila lemonade. bandidastaqueria.com



HOW TO DO IT

Return flights from Gatwick to Vancouver start from £415 (airtransat.com). Doubles at the Listel Hotel (which offers vegan breakfasts, including steel-cut oats with quinoa, flax and cinnamon cashew froth) start at £99, room only (thelistelhotel.com). More info: tourismvancouver.com

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