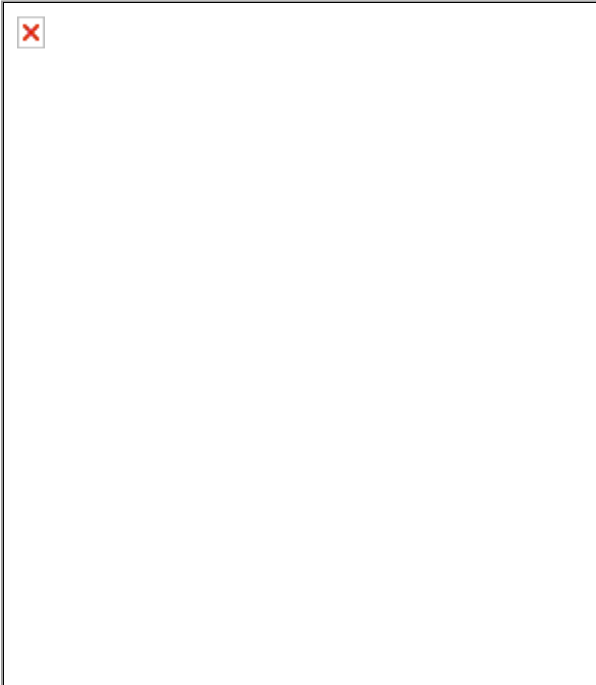


Travel Trip: Vancouver Chinese Garden

by Charlie Price

Published: November 28th, 2008



The Colorful and Cloudy Pavilion centers the garden.

Yin and yang are probably not the words that come to mind when you think of Vancouver, British Columbia. But tucked away amid the clutter of the city's Chinatown international district is a harmonious Asian escape surrounded by the urban landscape of Canada's third-largest city.

A representation of a Ming Dynasty scholar's residence, the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden is an authentic model of the private gardens found in the western Chinese city of Suzhou in the 15th century.

Highlighting the philosophy of yin and yang, the garden's details reflect balance and harmony. The garden wraps around the beautiful Yun Wei Ting, or Colorful and Cloudy Pavilion, perched on a manmade mountain of rock in the center of the garden. The garden's water elements are intentionally cloudy to intensify their reflective qualities and the plants are carefully selected for their symbolism. The hollow and pitted limestone rocks spread throughout the garden come from China's Lake Tai. Molded by water, the rocks are

said to invite lucky spirits into the garden.

The garden's architectural elements are mindfully planned, and two structures emphasize the builders' attention to historic and symbolic detail. The double corridor is a covered zigzag walkway that lines the garden's eastern wall. It was constructed so that the women of the house could always walk in the shade, no matter the sun's position in the sky. The crooked corridor is also thought to slow the progress of evil spirits.

The passage connects the garden's main courtyard to Han Bi Xie, or Jade Water Pavilion.

Boasting two intricately styled wooden screens called the Heaven and Earth Gates, the pavilion is a showplace of delicate craftsmanship.

Built in the mid-1980s at a cost of more than \$5 million, the garden is the first full-scale classical Chinese garden ever constructed outside of China. Created with historically accurate tools and techniques, construction on the garden lasted a full year. Many of the materials used to build the garden, including the woodwork and hand-fired roof tiles, were shipped to Canada from China.

To fully appreciate and understand the significance and symbolism of the materials, plants and decorations in the garden, join the guided tour. Interesting and entertaining, the tour brings the garden to life and showcases hidden details likely to go unnoticed by the casual tourist.

Sun Yat-Sen, the garden's namesake, is considered the father of modern China. A leader in the 1911 revolt that overthrew the Qing dynasty, Sun became the Republic's first president in 1912. A classical Chinese garden would seem out of place in Vancouver, except for the region's diverse ethnic makeup. British Columbia is home to a medley of cultures, and 90 percent of the province's 1 million ethnic minority residents come from Asian backgrounds.

A bit of ancient China hidden away in western Canada, the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden is a relaxing respite providing balance to the city's hustle and bustle.

If you go...

- Getting there: Flights from Oklahoma City and Tulsa to Vancouver start at around \$500.
- Staying there: Rooms at the [Sutton Place Hotel](#) start at around \$200 per night.
- Alternative accommodations: Rooms at the [Moda Hotel](#) start at \$100 per night.
- Not to be missed: The guided tour of the garden
- On the Web: www.vancouverchinesegarden.com

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