



# Top five off-peak destinations for spring 2012

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If your urge to travel thaws along with the season, now is the time to start planning a spring jaunt. For many destinations, spring is a transitional season before the hordes of summer arrive. Here are five vacation spots offering plenty of reasons to visit and the affordable prices travelers love.

## British Columbia

Spring converges on British Columbia with blooming flowers, late-season skiing, and of course great prices. Vancouver's affordable season lasts through May, while elsewhere in British Columbia, prices may not rise until late June.

The Canadian province is affordable, but there's still plenty to do in spring, including the **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival**, with tree walks, cherry-blossom viewing maps, and a "haiku invitational," from April 5 to 28. There's also the Mountain Spring Festival in Panorama Mountain Village (April 6 to 9),

the BC Open Gold Panning Championships in Cherryville (May 18 to 20), and the kick-off of Richmond's seasonal Night Market, a free weekly festival of food and shopping.

Spring savings can be substantial. For instance, at the [Echo Valley Ranch & Spa](#), a three-night package in April costs \$925 per person, but by July, rates shoot up to \$1,475. The price includes a lodge room, all meals and a variety of drinks, three spa treatments, classes, entertainment, and use of the spa and ranch facilities. At the Accent Inns Victoria, a [package with passes to The Butchart Gardens](#) is on offer for \$140 through April 30, or \$180 starting in July.

In Vancouver spring specials deliver way more bang for your Canadian buck. For instance, the [citywide 3rd Night Free offer](#) cuts costs at participating hotels, but only through April 30. And British Columbia's ski slopes aren't just for Olympic athletes—in mid-April, prepurchased lift-ticket rates drop by 30 percent or more, putting late-season skiers at a real competitive advantage.