

welcome to **Vernon!**



Don Weixl

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Vernon is located in the beautiful Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. The population is 40,000 with a regional population of approximately 59,000. Bordered by Kalamalka, Okanagan and Swan Lakes, Vernon has a great climate with four seasons offering outstanding recreational opportunities.

climate Source: Environment Canada (2011)

| | High | Low | Average |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------|
| January Daily Temperature | -1.6°C (29°F) | -6.7°C (20°F) | -4.2°C (24°F) |
| July Daily Temperature | 26.2°C (79°F) | 13.2°C (56°F) | 19.7°C (67°F) |
| Annual Average Sunshine | 2027 hours / Vancouver: 1938 hours | | |
| Annual Average Total Rainfall | 426 mm (16.8 inches) / Vancouver: 1457 mm (57.3 inches) | | |

basic information

- Tap water is safe and clean to drink, so there is no need to purchase bottled water.
- Power outlets operate on 110V (60Hz) and plugs are two parallel flat blades.
- We take pride in our environment, so please recycle (papers, bottles, plastics, etc).
- Not obligatory but it is customary in Canada to provide a tip for very good service between 10% to 15%.
- It is illegal for minors (18 years and under) to purchase alcohol or tobacco products. Smoking is also prohibited in many public places, including outside spaces.



getting around

Vernon is conveniently situated between Calgary and Vancouver, both with international airports and just a 45 minute flight from the Kelowna International Airport. The Kelowna airport is a 30 minute drive from Vernon and also provides direct flights to other cities across North America, including Los Angeles, Toronto and Seattle.

On school days (in both the morning and afternoon), the Vernon School District operates its own transportation system for students living more than 2.4 km from their school.

public transportation There is scheduled transit service throughout the Greater Vernon area. Bus stop signs denote where buses will pick-up and drop off riders. Drivers do not carry change, so exact change (student fare is \$1.75 for one zone and \$2.25 for multi-zone) is required. The best deal is a semester pass at \$100 for one zone and is good for 3 months. There are also tickets and passes (day and month) available for purchase at select retailers.

www.transitbc.com

cycling Biking is one of the fastest ways to get around. To encourage cycling, Vernon has many bike paths and lanes throughout the area. It is the law in British Columbia to wear a helmet while riding a bicycle.

walking Walking is a safe and convenient way to get around as most places in Vernon are within walking distance. Be sure to follow traffic lights and to use marked crosswalks.

money

Canadian coins come in 5¢ (nickel), 10¢ (dime), 25¢ (quarter), \$1 (loonie) and \$2 (toonie) denominations. Dollar bills are available in denominations of \$5 (blue), \$10 (purple), \$20 (green), \$50 (red) and \$100 (brown).

Many grocery and convenience stores and all bank locations have ATMs. Most are linked to international networks, such as Cirrus, Plus, Star and Maestro.

Vernon has several banks that offer banking services: Bank of Montreal, CIBC, HSBC Canada, Royal Bank, Scotiabank, and TD Canada Trust. Special student accounts with unlimited debit transactions and low or no monthly fees are available, and generally require an appointment to open.

It is strongly recommended that you do not carry large amounts of cash, i.e. more than \$100.



calling home

Phone numbers in North America have 10 digits. The first three digits are the area code, followed by the seven digit local number. Local calls require all 10 digits to be dialed to make a connection. Long distance calls within North America require a “1” to be dialed before the phone number. To make an international call, dial “011”, then the country code (e.g., Japan, 81), followed by the area code and number.

The most affordable way to call home is to use a prepaid long distance phone card which is available in most convenience stores, in increments of \$10 to \$100. Always read the fine print when comparing cards to understand any extra fees (e.g., connection charges and billing increments) that may be incurred.

mobile phones If you’re planning on bringing your mobile phone from home, you must ensure that it is unlocked and supports the right frequencies: GSM 850/1900 MHz , UMTS/HSDPA 850/1900Mhz, LTE 1700/2600, or AWS 1700/2100. If both these conditions are met, then you can buy a replacement SIM card. Otherwise you may need to purchase a new phone.

There is a range of mobile phone providers and plans available depending on your needs. Typically plans are for a 2 year term and start at \$35 per month for a basic plan. However, there are also prepaid plans available that allow you to choose and pay for what you need and don’t require a contract.

Long distance calls incur long distance charges along with airtime rates, which vary, depending on your phone plan. It is cheaper to

call using a long distance phone card or during off peak hours, which are evenings (after 6pm) and weekends.

Mobile phones and/or service can be purchased directly from the providers or through local retailers: Andre’s Communication, Bell World, Best Buy, Rogers, Target, The Source, Wireless Wave, London Drugs, Future Shop, Andre’s Electronic Experts, Pacific Coastcom, Real Canadian Superstore, and Tom Harris Cellular.

www.telus.com

www.bell.ca

www.rogers.com

www.virginmobile.ca

www.fido.ca

koodomobile.com

medical

hospital & walk-in clinics In case you need to see a doctor, you have the choice of going to any of the three walk-in clinics or to the emergency room at the hospital. You will only require your guard.me insurance card as identification.



As an international student, you will automatically be enrolled with guard.me insurance (www.guard.me). Those with

pre-existing health conditions will not be eligible for coverage with guard.me, so it is important that you let the International Program know about any existing health issues. The BC Medical insurance plan may be an option for you.

shopping

food Vernon is located in an agricultural area that allows for fresh, local food to be purchased at farmers markets from April to October. We also have a variety of supermarkets and organic food stores here in Vernon: Butcher Boys, Coopers, Nature's Fare, Quality Greens, Safeway, Save On Foods and Simply Delicious.

The larger supermarkets, such as Real Canadian Superstore and Walmart also carry a wide variety of products, including clothing, electronics and housewares.



A selection of international foods can be found in the larger grocery stores along with several specialty grocery shops: Latin Fiesta (South and Central American goods), Mabuhay Grocery (Filipino goods), Mediterranean Market (European goods) and Helmut's Sausage Kitchen (European goods).

downtown vernon Located primarily along 30th Avenue and filled with independent shops, downtown Vernon offers a variety of stores including jewellery, clothing, books, shoes, accessories, candy, toys and housewares.

village green centre The largest indoor shopping centre in the area, Village Green Centre is home to over 60 stores and services, including Hudson's Bay, Winners, Sport Chek and The Body Shop.



discount stores You'd be surprised what you can find for a \$1 or \$2 at one of the many dollar stores around town. Everything from school supplies to food to housewares can be found. The largest dollar stores are Dollarama at Vernon Square and Polson Place Mall, and Dollar Tree on 43rd Avenue, across from Seaton Secondary.

Other stores that may be worth checking out include Simply Delicious and Bulk Barn, who offer many food items such as candies and nuts in bulk along with Welk Mart that offers many items at a discounted price.

restaurants Whether you're looking to try something new or feeling homesick, there's a restaurant for you. Along with North American fare, there are restaurants here in Vernon that offer Indian, Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Nepalese, Japanese, Korean and Filipino food.

activities

sports and recreation The Greater Vernon Recreation Complex, located on 37th Avenue is the main recreation facility that houses an aquatic centre (pool), fitness gym, recreation gyms, arena and curling rink. They run a variety of programs and activities which can be found in their leisure guide or online at www.greatervernonrecreation.ca.

Enjoy a Canadian pastime and catch a Vernon Vipers hockey game at Kal Tire Place www.vipers.bc.ca. If you are looking to workout at a fitness gym, there are independent gyms located throughout town that offer classes such as yoga and pilates as well as fitness equipment.

Boasting several regional, community and Provincial Parks, Vernon has many fantastic hiking, biking and cross-country running trails. Trail maps can be found online at www.ribbonsofgreen.ca. Tennis is popular in Vernon and courts can be found in many neighbourhoods. Although there are too many activities to mention, here are a few that may be of interest:

soccer

- Vernon Youth Soccer - www.vernonyouthsoccer.org
- NOYSA, Vernon United FC - www.vernonunitedfc.com
- North Okanagan Youth Soccer Association - www.vernonsoccer.ca

skiing & snowboarding

- Silver Star Mountain Resort - www.skisilverstar.com
- Vernon Ski Club - www.vernonskiclub.ca

skating

- Vernon Speed Skating Club - www.vernonspeedskatingclub.com
- Vernon Figure Skating Club - www.vernonfigureskatingclub.com

hockey

- Vernon Minor Hokey - www.vernonminorhockey.com
- On the Edge Premier Hockey Academy - www.otehockeyacademy.com
- Greater Vernon Recreation Services - www.greatervernonrecreation.ca
- Okanagan Training Rink - www.vernonotr.com

running

- Kalamalka Running & Triathlon Sports Club - kalrats.com
- Vernon Pacers Running Club - www.vernonpacers.ca

horseback riding

- Vernon District Riding Club - vernonridingclub.com

dance

- Accentz Dance Studio - www.accentz.ca
- Cheek to Cheek Dance Studio - dancecheektocheek.com
- To the Pointe Productions Inc. - www.ttppi.com
- Argyll School of Performing Arts and Motion - www.argyllschool.com

golf

- Hillview Golf - www.hillviewgolf.ca
- Predator Ridge - www.predatorridge.com
- Spallumcheen Golf and Country Club - www.spallumcheengolf.com
- The Rise - www.therise.ca
- Vernon Golf & Country Club - www.vernongolf.com

gymnastics

- North Valley Gymnastics - www.nvgyim.com
- Okanagan Rhythmic Gymnastics Club - www.gymnasticsinvernon.com

martial arts

- Kees Tae Kwon Do - www.kees.ca
- Ultimate Truth Kyokushin Karate - www.utkarate.ca
- Pacific Top Team Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu - www.pttvernon.com

sailing

- North Okanagan Sailing Association - www.nosa.bc.ca

arts & culture Whether it's a concert, dance performance or theatre, www.ticket seller.ca is the best place to get tickets to the latest performances in the area. Looking to learn how to work with clay, fibre or just paint or draw? The Vernon Community Arts Centre offers a variety of art classes and workshops for all ages. www.vernonarts.ca

music

- Vernon Community Music School - www.vcmsonline.org
- Alpine Music School - www.alpinemusicschool.com
- Wentworth Music - www.wentworthmusic.ca
- Polson Park Music School - www.polsonparkmusic.ca
- Vernon Jazz Club - www.vernonjazzclub.ca

movie theatres

- Vernon Towne Theater - www.vernoncinema.com
- Cineplex Vernon - www.cineplex.com
- Starlight Drive In - www.starlightdrivein.ca

festivals & events Vernon is home to the Vernon Winter Carnival, the largest winter carnival in Western Canada and the second largest winter carnival in North America. This 10 day festival happens in early February and includes a parade, Hot Air Balloon Fiesta, and Snow Sculpture Competition, among many others.

Looking to find something uniquely Canadian as a souvenir? You might just find it at the Creative Chaos Fair held in early June. This fair is the largest craft fair of its kind in Western Canada and there's always something for everyone.

Late summer is the perfect time to see the agricultural roots of the area come to life during The Cowboy Festival held in August or the Interior Provincial Exhibition (IPE Fair) held during the Labour Day weekend in September. Not to be missed, the IPE is a 5 day fair that allows you to get up close and personal with farm animals, watch a rodeo, listen to live music and seek thrills on the many rides at the midway.

This is just a snapshot of the many events that happen around Vernon. For more info on what's going on, visit the Visitor Info Centre or www.tourismvernon.com.



Don Weixl

Predator Ridge Golf Resort

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Vernon School District

**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT PROGRAM**

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