



FOR MOVERS FROM ALBERTA

Alberta, to the Island

2026 EDITION

Trading the long winters for the coast, the climate, and a different pace, with the prairies still a direct flight away.

Travis Bach and Kiel Bach

RE/MAX Professionals · Central Vancouver Island

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WELCOME

From the prairies to the coast

We're Travis and Kiel Bach, and a good share of the people we help are making exactly this move, from Calgary, Edmonton, and across Alberta to Vancouver Island. Some are retiring, some work remotely, some just want their kids growing up by the ocean.

This is the straight version of what the move is really like: what it costs, what changes when you switch provinces, how you get here and stay connected, and where Alberta folks tend to land. It is a starting point, not advice, so confirm the current details. When you're ready to talk specifics, that's where we come in.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- ✓ What your budget really does here, the honest version.
- ✓ The provincial switch: health care, your licence and insurance, and taxes.
- ✓ Flights and ferries home, and where Alberta movers settle.

YOUR ISLAND TEAM



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THE DRAW

Why Albertans make the move

Everyone's reason is a little different, but a few come up again and again.

A winter you can live in. Mild, mostly above freezing, and snow that rarely sticks. You trade the ice, the block heaters, and the snow tires for a wet, green season and a long outdoor one.

The ocean, and the outdoors all year. Beaches, trails, boats, and golf into November. For a lot of Albertans used to a big-sky outdoor life, the Island just moves that life outside twelve months a year.

A slower pace, without losing the city. Smaller, calmer communities, but Nanaimo still has the hospital, the shopping, and the flights, and Victoria and Vancouver are close.

Family and a new chapter. Often it is retirement, a remote job that freed you up, or simply the sense that it is time for a change of scene.

THE HONEST MONEY TALK

What your budget does here

Here is where we will be straight with you, because it matters: for most Albertans, this is not the move you make to save on housing. It is the one you make for the life.

Housing. If you're coming from Calgary, detached prices here land in a broadly similar range. From Edmonton, expect to pay more. The Island sits well above Alberta on price overall, so plan for housing to cost the same or more, not less.

The everyday. BC has a provincial sales tax that Alberta does not, so some day-to-day costs run higher. The offset is the climate: milder winters mean lower heating, no snow tires, and a lot less wear and weather on your life and your vehicles.

CALGARY

About \$570,000

EDMONTON

About \$414,000

NANAIMO

About \$815,000

PORT ALBERNI

About \$506,000

Rough benchmark figures, 2026; Alberta board composites and VIREB single-family. Treat as a snapshot. We'll always pull the current numbers for the home and area you're considering.

THE REAL TRADE

Come for the winters, the coast, and the pace, and budget honestly for the housing. Where Albertans stretch a dollar furthest is Port Alberni and parts of the Cowichan Valley; where they pay a premium is the oceanfront. We'll show you both.

CHANGING PROVINCES

The switch from Alberta to BC

Moving provinces means a few real changes. None are hard if you know them going in.

Health care. Your Alberta coverage doesn't carry over. Enrol in BC's Medical Services Plan as soon as you arrive; coverage starts after a wait of the rest of your arrival month plus two more, so carry private insurance to bridge it.

Your licence and your car. Switch to a BC driver's licence and register and insure your vehicle with ICBC within 90 days. ICBC is BC's public auto insurer, a different system from Alberta's, so get a quote early; rates may surprise you either way.

Taxes and the rest. BC's income-tax brackets differ from Alberta's, and the provincial sales tax is new to you. Update your address on everything, and budget for the first-year admin.

Finding a doctor. Register with the provincial Health Connect Registry to be matched with a family doctor. Be honest with yourself that this can take time across the Island, so get on the list right away.

GETTING HERE, AND HOME

Flights, ferries, and staying close

One of the best parts of this move: Alberta stays easy to reach, so family visits and trips back stay simple.

Direct flights. WestJet flies direct from Calgary and Edmonton to Comox (YQQ) and to Nanaimo (YCD), and Victoria (YYJ) has the most options. For much of the central Island, Nanaimo or Comox puts you home in a short hop.

Driving and the ferry. It's roughly a day's drive from Calgary or Edmonton to the coast, then a ferry across, Tsawwassen to Duke Point near Nanaimo (about two hours) or Horseshoe Bay to Departure Bay (about ninety minutes). Book the ferry ahead in summer.

Bringing your life over. Movers handle the long haul; your vehicles come on the ferry. Many people make one scouting trip, buy, then move once, which is exactly the kind of run we help plan.

FINDING YOUR FIT

Where Albertans tend to land

Most people land between two or three areas. A few starting points, by what tends to matter to movers from Alberta.

Want the hub, with flights and the hospital. Nanaimo: every service, both ferry terminals, the airport, and the widest range of homes and prices.

Want the warmest, driest, best value. The Cowichan Valley around Duncan: wine-and-farm country, a milder climate even than the rest of the coast, and a budget that goes further.

Want beaches and an easy retiree pace. Parksville and Qualicum Beach: warm, shallow sand, walkable towns, and a long-time draw for people slowing down.

Want the most affordable way in, and the outdoors. Port Alberni: the most attainable homes around, with rivers, lakes, and the west coast at the door.

Ski, and want mountains with the ocean. The Comox Valley: Mount Washington's slopes, its own airport with direct Alberta flights, and a four-season feel that suits a lot of Albertans.

THE MOVE

Step by step

- ✓ Pick two or three areas that fit your life, and we'll tell you what each is really like.
- ✓ Talk to a BC mortgage broker about what you can borrow here.
- ✓ Make a scouting trip, or let us tour homes for you by live video.
- ✓ Make your offer with us; we read the market with real comparables.
- ✓ Line up the switch: MSP enrolment, ICBC and your licence, address changes.
- ✓ Book movers and your ferry, then make the drive or the flight once.
- ✓ Land, settle, and register for a family doctor the week you arrive.

WORTH KNOWING

What nobody tells you

It's lifestyle, not a housing discount. Go in expecting to pay the same or more for a home than in Alberta, and the move makes sense for the right reasons.

Winters are wet, not white. You trade snow and ice for grey and rain from late fall into spring, then a long, easy outdoor season.

Plan for the provincial switch. The MSP wait, the ICBC change, and PST are the three that catch Albertans off guard. None are hard; just plan for them.

Keep your Alberta ties. Direct flights make it genuinely easy to stay close to family and come back when you want.

The family-doctor wait is real. It's the same across the Island, so register the day you arrive and use walk-ins and urgent care meanwhile.

HOW WE HELP

Let's make it one move

Where you land shapes the whole experience. We help Alberta buyers choose the right area, tour from a distance, and plan the switch so you move once and settle well. We're guides first, and happy to tell you the honest version of any community.

TALK IT THROUGH WITH US



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Book a 20-minute call, or explore listings and neighbourhood guides at bachrealestate.ca

PLEASE NOTE

This guide is a general overview to help you plan, not financial, legal, or tax advice. Prices, fares, taxes, and rules are current at the time of writing and they change, so please confirm the latest before you act, and rely on the appropriate licensed professional along with gov.bc.ca.

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