

WHISTLER

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1. The crossing: Getting to Whistler by air requires flying to Vancouver, a beautiful city that deserves at least a few days of your time. En route to Whistler, the awe-inspiring ambiance of the Sea to Sky Highway with its misty mountainous landscape creates an unfolding cinematic slice of visual therapy. It's one of the few travel occasions left in which the process of getting somewhere becomes a thrill on its own.

2. Blackcomb Beauty: An exemplary landing perch, the Fairmont Chateau Whistler resides at the base of the Blackcomb Mountains. Its mountainside setting with ski out the door convenience and on-site golf course offers a year-round array of activities, arts and culture. Near the chateau, a pedestrian shortcut along a wooded path winds its way over a footbridge above a tree-lined stream that ends at Whistler Village. Cap a perfect day in the mountain air with dinner in the chateau's Wildflower Restaurant, where Executive Chef Vincent Stufano puts locally sourced ingredients into their best light each evening. Dreams of a ski-in/ski-out vacation become reality when combined with night time bliss between crisp sheets in the refuge of the chateau's tranquility.



3. Cornucopia: If you fancy yourself the next Tyler Florence or Rachel Ray but getting a culinary degree isn't on your life list, you can pick up some cooking skills while tasting incredible dishes with perfect wine pairings at Whistler's annual celebration of wine and food. Some of the area's most illustrious chefs and winemakers pull out all the stoppers for this event with winemaker dinners and seminars. Want to discover which cheeses compliment and enhance different wines? Or learn the history of macarons while watching a talented baker demonstrate the delicacies of turning out the most divine examples this side of Paris? These and many more educational seminars were held at this fall's five day extravaganza of dining, drinking, tasting, cooking and partying called Cornucopia. It takes place at many of Whistler's finest hotels, including the Fairmont Chateau, every fall. Book early for next year; many events are sold out within days of ticket offerings.



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4. Lord (or Lady) of the Rings: Olympic Plaza offers Gold Medal contenders and everyone else prime photo ops. Stand near or even inside one of the glittering Olympic Rings at Whistler's Olympic Plaza and pose like the winner you are as you share the space where so many strove for glory during the 2010 Winter Olympics.



5. Go Scandinavian: Rub and scrub, sweat and chill, meditate and moon gaze. A world unto itself, Scandinave Spa, just north of Whistler Village, lies engulfed in a spruce and cedar forest on the edge of Lost Lake and Spruce Grove parks. Immerse yourself in the hot baths and soothing waterfalls; melt away stress with a hot stone massage; breathe in pristine mountain air and emerge feeling calm and invigorated. Allow yourself at least three hours;; four is better. The spa is open into the early evening hours.



6. A Peak Experience: Ride the gleaming glass-bottomed gondola over the valley between Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains, keeping an eye out for bears foraging up and down the mountain slopes below. Boasting the longest unsupported lift span in the world, the Peak-2-Peak Gondola links the two mountains at their peaks and allows hikes at the top of each. From your cocoon in the clouds high above snow-capped peaks and spring-fed lakes, you'll hold your breath as you look down on the town of Whistler looking like a Grandma Moses painting.

7. A storied past: Listen to the folklore, linger under the cedar-planked roof of a traditional longhouse or try your hand at canoe carving with a visit to the Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Museum. Dedicated to and run by descendents of Canada's first inhabitants, the Squamish and Lil'wat tribes, the museum highlights the culture, history and art of these two First Nations who have admirably lived in harmony with nature for centuries. Self-guided or expert-led tours start with a drumming performance, followed by a short film on the nations. A theater, gift gallery and café round out the experience.

8. The mountains: Epic views are just the beginning. Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains encompass more than 8,000 acres of diverse terrain. Each has more than 100 trails, many of them long cruising runs through pine forests. Winter snow accumulation averages about 39 feet annually putting Whistler at the pinnacle of snowboarding and skiing destinations. Those who choose Whistler when the snow has melted agree with locals who boast about the beauty of summer and fall with its plethora of biking and hiking trails, glacial lakes, and rock climbing sites. Take a glide to heaven on a gondola. Photograph the lakes, peaks and cloud formations. It's pure Whistler.

9. The ultimate golf experience: Karen Misuraca in [“Best Golf Resorts of the World”](#) writes of the Fairmont Chateau Golf Course: “By allowing nature to dictate the path without constraints of commercial influence, The Fairmont Chateau Whistler golf course traverses creeks, ponds, stands of ancient Douglas fir and granite rock faces. The site’s Audubon Certification allows wildlife to roam freely on the course, making it the perfect spot to grab a few photos of a passing deer or bear before teeing off.”

10. Dining Around: Meal time is prime time in Whistler. Diners reap the benefits of a culture that has created a bounty of world-class chefs who partner with local farmers and British Columbia wineries to showcase creative regional dining experiences. Two outstanding venues: The Grill Room at Fairmont Chateau and Araxi Restaurant.

For all things Whistler, visit: www.whistler.com/



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