

HOMEFRONT™

The art of living

ADVEI



Decompression, West Coast Style

By Jessica Dolinsky

The Sea-to-Sky Highway's rugged views and fresh mountain air quickly distance me from life's hectic moments, and I arrive at Nita Lake Lodge feeling relaxed and comfortably ready to embrace the Whistler lifestyle. Surrounded by the iconic Rocky Mountains, which provide the backdrop to the lodge's namesake glacier-fed lake, Nita Lake Lodge is a 77-room hotel with both deluxe studios and bedroom suites, located just outside the heart of town. The picturesque accommodation is immersed in nature, while highlighting the beauty of the community.

A girls' getaway, coupled with just the right amount of adventure, is on the menu. As I settle into my beyond-comfortable lakeview suite, furnished with king-sized beds, double soaker tub, glass-enclosed rain shower, elegant furniture and gas fireplace, the world soon feels miles away. In Nita's Cure Lounge, creative cocktails served with local cheeses, house-made charcuterie and preserves offer just enough fuel to cajole me onto a stand-up paddle-board before sunset. Paddle, steady, paddle, glide and don't fall into the ice cold water... I'd mastered it in no time.

There is room for a casual dinner here at Nita, but for those of us interested in taking it up a notch, Araxi's Executive Chef James Wait in Whistler Village cooks up a fine feast. Voted Best Whistler Restaurant in Vancouver Magazine's annual restaurant awards, Araxi is known for capturing the full-bodied flavours of the season using ingredients from local farmers, ranchers and fishermen. Mouth-watering! The conversation, and the wine, lingers long into the night, just as it should.

Time for adventure

There are no excuses the next morning. As the sun comes up, it's time to embrace the day. I'm a Loka Yoga novice so I have to learn to chant and move. No worries, I've got this. Okay, maybe not. The dedicated teachers gently—and, might I add, tactfully—guide me through the exercises as if I were a pro.





Next up... Ziptrek Ecotours! With my helmet strapped on and safety gear secured, I'm ready to fly over the Fitzsimmons Valley between Whistler and the Blackcomb Mountains. As I spread my arms in the air to capture a feeling of total exhilaration, the sound of triumph echoes through the peaks. Or is that a petrified scream? Count them—five different ziplines, including a 2,400-foot ride with a daring 30-storey descent. This is one for the bucket list.

After those thrills, I figure I've earned some lunch! Off we trek to the comfy Stonesedge Kitchen, where it is time to learn how to prep wholesome comfort food in clever new ways: vegetarian, vegan and gluten free. I'm tempted, of course, to go for a little bit of everything.

No ladies' getaway is complete without a trip to the spa. A body scrub followed by a Swedish massage is just enough to melt away any zipline tension. With the lingering scent of eucalyptus from the steamroom and the ambience of the relaxation lounge, we take off for the next activity in a luscious state of calm.

Local produce, local beauty

Dinner time arrives almost too quickly, but we are famished after all that fresh air. Earlier in the day we'd enjoyed lunch at Nita Lake Lodge, and we are thrilled to return to our "home away from home" for an unforgettable evening full of laughter and stories. Aura Restaurant's lakeside setting is quite special, and Chef Dean clearly honours the region's local produce and fresh flavours with his succulent creations. The seared scallops with the heritage carrots and fingerling potatoes were worth writing home about—or at least worthy of a tweet or two.

The village is surrounded by so many natural features that the outdoor adventure options at Whistler seem endless. Driving an ATV Mountain Explorer turns out to be a fantastic and perhaps bold way for us gals to see the mountains. The mountainous terrain also offers plenty of hiking, jogging and biking through village and valley. Now that's my kind of busy!

After an active afternoon on our last day we are invited to The Red Door Bistro for one final treat. With a passion for French cuisine married with a distinct zest for all things west, Chef RD Stewart puts his heart and soul into each carefully crafted dish. And just when I think I can't eat one more morsel, along comes a vanilla-bean crème brûlée for dessert.

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Needless to say, it isn't hard to indulge one more time before Whistler and Nita became but fond memories to escape to when life gets hectic. But I won't forget that Nita Lake Lodge is far enough away to enjoy a few days' break, but close enough to home that I can head back soon.