



CORNUCOPIA FOOD FESTIVAL

Or, enjoying Whistler without hitting the slopes.

Writer **Adrienne Matei**

Ten-day long food and wine festival **Cornucopia** has enlivened Whistler Village's autumnal shoulder season for almost 20 years. Comprised of seminars and special events celebrating local food and drink, the festival provides the welcome opportunity for the less athletically-inclined to visit the mountain-sport Mecca. In November, one just misses the resort's ski season, although leisurely-amble-around-scenic-lake season is in fine form. If so inclined, booking a stay at the world-class **Nita Lake Lodge**—internationally recognized for its gloriously comfortable rooms, attentive service, and beautiful waterfront setting—is advisable. The yoga studio, cozy fireside lounge, rooftop hot tubs, and spa, which offers chakra-balancing massages, ensure one will have many opportunities to relax. Once comfortably appointed, food-lovers may take part in a variety of events, from the wellness-oriented Nourish series, which includes detox brunches and seminars on fermented foods and graceful aging; to **craft beer** and wine markets, which pour some of the province's best well into the night; and exquisite Chef's Table meals. For the latter, Cornucopia's 2015 program included a lunch with **Aburi Restaurant Group's** Minami (seared aburi sushi, miso cod with daikon and eggplant, and marshmallow-y matcha opera cake served in a multi-million dollar mountainside mansion) and Massey Wines. Chef Jefferson Alvaraz, soon to open his own South American restaurant, Sur, in Vancouver's Kitsilano neighbourhood, gave diners at his Into the Wild-themed dinner a taste of British Columbia's foraged bounties, including a medley of seven wild local mushrooms prepared separately to preserve their individual tastes and textures, topped with surprisingly addictive tufts of crunchy, salty, deep-fried moss. Alvaraz's local elk and sustainable sturgeon steak dishes served respectively with cabernet sauvignon and syrah from Okanagan's Stags Hollow winery epitomize B.C.'s culinary bounty. Cornucopia demonstrates that indeed, beautiful B.C. tastes as good as it looks.

