

## Gooseneck barnacles are a lure to Tofino

Posted May 17, 2016 by [Adrian Brijbassi](#) in [British Columbia](#)



Gooseneck barnacles, which are covered in a soft, green shell, are served at Wolf in the Fog with Pacific geoduck and brioche. (Adrian Brijbassi/Vacay.ca)

**Story by Adrian Brijbassi**

**Vacay.ca Managing Editor**

TOFINO, BRITISH COLUMBIA — Nick Nutting grins when he talks about gooseneck barnacles and his fortune to have them come through the door of his restaurant straight from a fishing boat.

"A 'home boy' brings them to us every other day or so," says Nutting, the executive chef at [Wolf in the Fog](#), an acclaimed restaurant in [Tofino](#). "They're not consistently on the menu but that's because getting to them can be pretty dangerous."



The fried oyster at Wolf in the Fog is beautifully hidden beneath a canopy of crusted potatoes. (Adrian Brijbassi/Vacay.ca)



The barnacles, which are part of the crustacean family, grow on rocks and often at the point where the tide meets the surface. Harvesting them is risky, with fishermen having to battle the waves and the hard, craggy surface to snatch or shovel the coveted barnacles out of the rock.

Spain and [Vancouver Island](#) are the two places where the barnacles are commonly harvested, making this delicacy rare and highly sought after. In Tofino, one of the most eclectic communities in Canada, barnacles are served at a handful of restaurants, making this outpost nicknamed "The End of the Road" a must place for foodies to visit. In terms of taste, the barnacles share the common attributes of crustaceans. They're sweet and tender, and similar in flavour to scallops or stone crabs.

During my visit to Wolf in the Fog in April, Nutting served the barnacles in a warm, flavourful sauce with a touch of spiciness and alongside another hard-to-find delicacy from the Pacific northwest: geoduck. The plate comes with brioche and a brilliant utensil, a tiny bamboo skewer that diners use to poke and cudgel the barnacle from out of its shell.

"I've been to Spain and had a lot of dirty hands," Nutting says with a smile as he explains why he chose to add the skewer instead of making his guests grapple with the barnacles' hard shells that cover the meat.

### Rare Culinary Treats in Tofino

The restaurant receives about 10 pounds of barnacles per delivery and when he gets them, Nutting says they're on the menu right away and gone that night. Not surprising, because the barnacles as he prepared them were one of the most interesting dishes I've enjoyed in a while. Every bite was sublime. The barnacles were soft but not chewy and, despite its richness, the sauce didn't overpower the seafood. The brioche was a thoughtful and smart accompaniment.

That said, if you visit Wolf in the Fog and the gooseneck barnacles aren't available, you won't be too disappointed. Nutting has created as good of a casual fine-dining experience as you'll find in [British Columbia](#).



The namesake wolf adorns the second floor of the Wolf in the Fog, a culinary star on the west coast. (Julia Pelish file photo/Vacay.ca)

The plates focus on local ingredients, including Bamfield Seaweed Salad (\$8), Moroccan-spiced Octopus (\$15), and Charred Squid and Pork Belly (\$20). A staple item is the beautifully designed and addictively tasty Potato Crusted Oyster (\$4), with a touch of apple and truffle. The potato tower is built atop the lone oyster and presented on a glass plate shaped like a fish. Every meal in the restaurant, if not the region, should start with something so eye-catching and fun.

Like other restaurants in the village, Wolf in the Fog is in the midst of Feast Tofino, a culinary event that continues to grow in stature thanks to the reputation of the restaurants involved and the visiting chefs who make their way west to participate.

Upcoming events at the Wolf in the Fog include collaborations on May 18 and 19 between Nutting and Calgary-based Justin Leboe, who operates Model Milk and Pigeonhole.

## MORE ABOUT WOLF IN THE FOG

**Address:** 150 Fourth Street, Tofino, BC (see map below)

**Reservations:** Telephone, 1-250-725-WOLF (9653) or [click here](#).

**Menu Price Range:** Small plates, \$4-\$18; Large plates, \$15-\$32; Sharing plates (for two or more people), \$45-\$70

**You Must Order:** Potato Crusted Oyster (\$4)

**Top Restaurants in Canada Rank:** No. 46 in 2015

**Website:** [www.wolfinthefog.com](http://www.wolfinthefog.com)

## MORE ABOUT FEAST TOFINO

**2016 Dates:** May 6-22

**Website:** [www.feasttofino.com](http://www.feasttofino.com)

