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MEET DAVID HAWKSWORTH high-flying entrepreneur

Vancouver chef opens up about his travels, which usually involve food. [Pages B14/15](#)



David Hawksworth and his son Heston glamping at Clayoquot Wilderness Resort. If you hear the dogs bark at night, Hawksworth said, you know a bear is likely close by.

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Seeking out good food at every stop

Vancouver chef David Hawksworth, a culinary partner to Air Canada, shares inside scoop

Q Why do you travel?

A I travel for business and for pleasure — although in either case I'm always seeking out some kind of outstanding food experience whether it's a new opening, the best noodle bar or pizza joint or an incredible market or some new food trend. The number one thing I hate is bad food — there's just no reason for it. Food doesn't need to be fancy but the simplest dish can be the most incredible thing.

For work travel, I'm the culinary partner to Air Canada creating meals for in-flight business class, maple leaf lounges and their new Signature Suite at Toronto Pearson Airport. Making delicious meals at 30,000 feet with limited prep spaces comes with its own unique set of trials and tribulations but I'm proud to partner with our national airline and am enjoying rising to the challenge — pardon the pun!

I also travel across the country for my role as founder and judge of the Hawksworth Young Chef Scholarship Foundation. Each year, we seek out the most talented young chefs in Canada to compete to win \$10,000!

For pleasure travel, my hobbies are fishing and skiing so they drive a lot of decisions on destinations within Canada. I also lived in Europe for

more than 10 years so have travelled extensively in the U.K., also in France and Italy and most recently Greece and Croatia.

I've been to Australia and Japan (Tokyo), China (Hong Kong), Singapore, Thailand and Mexico and the Bahamas and to the U.S. (to L.A., San Francisco, New York, Memphis, Malibu, Miami, Florida, Seattle, San Jose, Palm Springs and Hawaii).

Q What's your favourite destination and why?

A That's a tough one, but my top food cities are London, Montreal, L.A., San Francisco, Tokyo and Sydney.

For skiing I still say you can't beat Whistler and I'm there as much as I can be during ski season. But if I were to travel further afield, then Val d'Isère, a ski resort in the French Alps, is one of my most memorable trips along with heli-skiing at Mike Wiegele in Blue River, B.C.

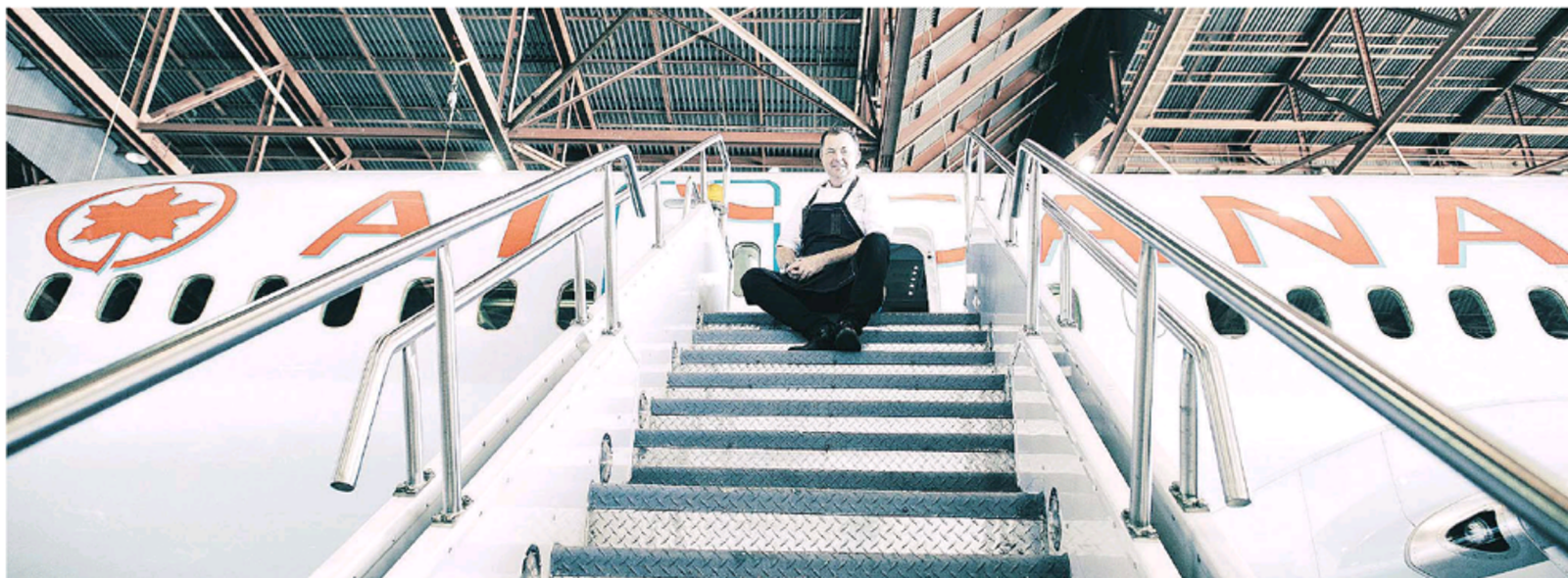
With Whistler now part of Vail's EPIC pass, I'm excited to try more of the U.S. resorts and have already booked my first trip to ski Park City, Utah, and have earmarked their Lake Tahoe resorts for later in the year and Hakuba, Japan for 2020 — I've heard the skiing there is phenomenal! I want to ski La Grave (in France) before I'm too old!



Food markets in Thailand prove food doesn't have to be expensive or fancy to enrich an incredible travel experience.



David, Annabel and Heston Hawksworth during Hawksworth & Friends, an annual cooking and fishing trip at West Coast Fishing Club in Haida Gwaii.



Chef David Hawksworth is a culinary partner to Air Canada and does plenty of travelling for business and pleasure — both involving the search for fantastic cuisine.

Q Where do you stay? What type of accommodations do you look for?

A One of my favourite places to stay is West Coast Fishing Club in Haida Gwaii. I've been going there for years with friends, with work colleagues and business partners and now that he's older with my son on fishing trips. I love that it's small and so remote but with a very high level of service from the staff there.

When I travel with my wife, Annabel, she always seeks out the boutique hotels with character and a sense of place. Our favourite Whistler abode is Nita Lake Lodge and in the U.K., Rosewood London — both really speak to where they are and feel very "local" and are warm and comfortable and well located.

For long stays with family and friends we use Airbnb or other home rental services. We always insist on a decent kitchen so I can cook up a storm with local ingredients — and always read the user reviews carefully!

Q What's the biggest surprise you've had with a destination?

A I flew to Tokyo especially to eat at a tiny but widely celebrated sushi restaurant after watching the documentary, Jiro Dreams of Sushi, on a flight home from New York.

Sushi chef Jiro Ono (now in his 90s) is a perfectionist who has been working in restaurants since the age of seven and is regarded as the best sushi chef in the world. It's tough to get a reservation there and we had to pull all sorts of strings — I was travel-

ling with my head chef at the time. Two things surprised me: Jiro scrutinized every bite we ate, it was quite uncomfortable. And while it was unquestionably very good, what really surprised me was how well Vancouver's sushi restaurants measured up. We really do have excellent sushi here, my favourites being Temaki on Broadway and Yuji on Alma.

Beyond that, I couldn't believe how clean and organized Tokyo is — it's really remarkable.

Q Any times your trip didn't work out? And how did you handle it?

A I feel like everyone has a border story. I was travelling with my knives once and got denied entry into the U.S. — I was headed to Washington D.C. for a B.C. to D.C.-themed dinner that I was creating for a friend and his guests. I couldn't unpack my bag for about three weeks after. I was so sad to miss it, we'd been planning for months.

Another time travelling to New York on business we stayed at the Carlyle Hotel, a New York icon steeped in history and I was looking forward to experiencing it. But when we checked in the room was beyond tiny — even by New York standards — and it was decorated in pretty florals, not really the thing for two burly chefs!

We just laughed, though, and got on with it — we were there to eat and work!

Q What's your advice, tips or recommendations for our readers?

A When travelling for work, it's great to build some exercise into your itinerary — there's some great in-room workouts you can access on YouTube these days, or better still, get out and run! New York City running tours took us across the Brooklyn Bridge and all through the financial district. It was a great way to explore, get informed and get a hunger on for dinner!

One of my top tips for getting the best food experience is to always ask the locals. I ask always ask Uber drivers and cabbies where to go, they tend to have a good pulse on a city, and when I'm at a good restaurant I always quiz the wait staff about the most popular dishes and their personal favourites.

A little unexpected adventure on an otherwise horizontal beach-centric vacation is the bamboo hike in Maui. You take the highway to Hana and then skip the first two entrances to find the third, more hidden, one. Make your way through the tall bamboo forest to find a magnificent waterfall at the end. The rope and ladder are challenging and clambering over boulders can be tough so don't do what we did one time and get caught in a rain shower — it can get very slippery and muddy. You need a sturdy swim shoe! Best plan is to go in the morning on a dry day and stop at Paia Fish Market on the way back for fish tacos made with the daily catch!

Q What's the strangest place you've stayed at?

A I'm not sure I'd call it strange, but glamping at Clay-

quot Wilderness Resort was certainly unique — canvas tents with hardwood floors and antique furnishings. If you hear the dogs bark at night you know there's a bear close by. My favourite was the outdoor rain shower — nothing like bathing in the wilderness!

Retalack Lodge, a bucket list cat-ski operation in Nelson, B.C., checks the box when it comes to strange in regard to the nightly après ski activities. Don't ask!

Q What's your best travel story?

A Seeing Asia for the first time through the eyes of my then seven-year-old son was definitely a highlight. We went through Hong Kong and Bangkok to Phuket, Thailand. It was an incredibly long and hot journey. But somehow we got upgraded to a fully serviced apartment-style accommodation that was so luxurious and huge, with our own private pool and two balconies!

We went out on a fishing boat for a day with locals, had a picnic on a private island, snorkelled in pristine oceans, learned Muay Thai and explored the local food markets that were filled with exotic fruits, unusual fish and interesting deep-fried bugs and worms to nibble on — a great source of protein but I couldn't quite go there.

Q Anything our readers should know before trying to follow in your travel footsteps?

A Always pack your stretchy



Banje Beach in Croatia is one of the many places chef David Hawksworth has visited.

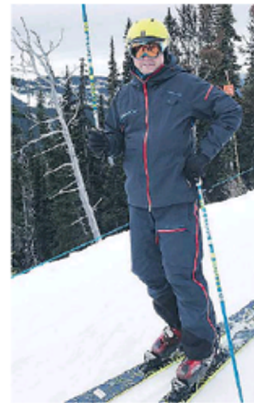
pants!

Q Tell us about why you seek out the mountains?

A Skiing for me is completely relaxing, it takes you out of your regular life and you're forced to focus on nothing but the next turn. The surroundings are incredibly beautiful and I love that feeling of exhaustion at the end of the ski day — relaxing by the fire and enjoying a good meal is that much more enjoyable.

Q Where do you want to go that you haven't been yet?

A Peru and Argentina are on my bucket list, I've heard the food scene is well worth checking out. I've not been to South America and am excited to explore the history, culture and nature. Skiing in Japan is also up



Whistler Blackcomb is one of David Hawksworth's top skiing destinations.

there. I've heard, in terms of the conditions, it's simply the best there is!

Next month's Traveller Profile: Ken Coach

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