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NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Food
Traveler

A quintessential guide
to the Northwest food
and beverage scene

A Road
Tripper's Guide
to Vancouver Island

A Picture-Perfect
Getaway to
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Display until August 31, 2023



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FINDING
PERSPECTIVE IN AN

ALPINE WONDERLAND

"...settled into a feeling of profound gratitude for being where I was, and for being in general. It was a hell of a way to kick off a trip."

BY ADAM SAWYER

I don't remember his exact words, as I was kind of overwhelmed by the moment. There was indescribable beauty unfurling endlessly in front of me. There were my own cluttered thoughts trying to make sense of a recent personal loss. And then came his words. Slowly making their way through the fog in my mind until they were front and center and the sole objects of my focus. Our Indigenous interpretive guide, Tim Patterson, was talking to our hiking group about the power of natural places. Detailing why for time immemorial, again and again, his people have been coming to outdoor cathedrals like the one I was currently transfixed upon.

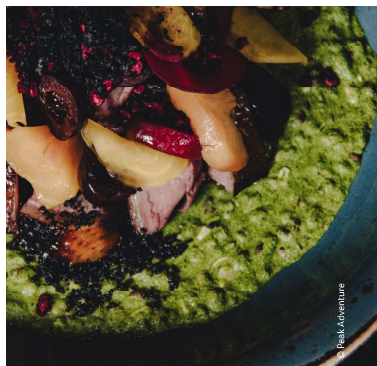
And as if he had struck a tuning fork perfectly modulated to the pitch of my soul, his words resonated so deeply that I needed to step away from the group and compose myself. I stared off to the mountains, wiped the tears from my eyes, and settled into a feeling of profound gratitude for being where I was, and for being in general. It was a hell of a way to kick off a trip.

The day before, we had checked into the Heather Mountain Lodge. Located halfway between Golden and Revelstoke in British Columbia, the lodge sits perched on the edge of Canada's Glacier National Park. The lodge's location alone would be enough for anybody looking to explore the natural wonders in and around Rogers Pass and the Selkirk Mountains to want to call it home.

The grounds of the lodge are, of course, gorgeous. However, this cozy, rustic little piece of mountain magic has an ace in the hole in the form of its onsite restaurant, Kindle. Chef Stephan

Drolet and his staff produce wood-fired, fine-dining culinary offerings that celebrate time and place in such a unique way. The local, seasonal ingredients are utilized in a way that spotlights the bounty of the region as well as the property itself. The restaurant's own tagline sums it up with aplomb - Foraged. Farmed. Fired.

We spent two nights at the Heather Mountain Lodge, and the whole time there was memorable. But the high points for me were the first night's dinner at Kindle and the next day's perspective-shifting hike along the Great Glacier Trail.



From Heather Mountain, we drove into the town of Golden. That afternoon we paid a visit to the Golden Skybridge. I have to admit that I learned about the set of Canada's highest suspension bridges from Instagram. Don't judge me. Regardless of the origin of discovery, I knew that I desperately wanted to stand on a bridge 426 feet above a waterfall-laden canyon and take in the views of the Purcell Mountains out across the Columbia Valley. And it exceeded expectations. Additionally, the Golden Skybridge is something of a family-friendly adventure park, offering ziplining, climbing and even axe throwing. All wonderful additions, but for my money, nothing outshines the view from the middle of that canyon.



OFF THE
GRID

After a convivial dinner at a local favorite, Eleven22, we retired to our home for the evening—the Base Camp Lodge—where I did not sleep particularly well. Allow me to make perfectly clear that my interrupted slumber had nothing to do with the comfort of my accommodations, but rather everything to do with the fact that I was in toddler-the-night-before-Christmas mode because the next morning we would be climbing into a helicopter.

Our home for the next two nights would be the Purcell Mountain Lodge. And the way you get there is via a 15-minute helicopter flight, high into the Purcell Mountains where the backcountry lodge resides. It's a place of otherworldly natural beauty. Mountains and meadows, wildflowers and wildlife. All explorable by a network of trails that branch off in every direction from the lodge. It's a landscape and lodging that feels like it could be, perhaps should be, my home.

In keeping with one of the themes of the trip, the culinary experience provided at the Purcell Mountain

Lodge was exceptional. Chef Josef forages wild edibles from the fields of Elysium surrounding the lodge to accompany and complement other regional and seasonal ingredients in the creation of every meal.

On our first day, we took a guided hike to a series of creeks, ponds, alpine meadows, and viewpoints that placed me in the same mindset I found myself in days earlier. The next day we climbed high above it all to a viewpoint that provided 360 degrees of contemplative inspiration.

My travel plans mandated that I leave the lodge that afternoon. On the helicopter ride back to Golden, I gazed out at the glaciated peaks and fertile valleys. Mother Nature's grand cathedrals, again stretching out as far as the eye could see. And I was grateful for them. I'll come back to them. Because while the answers I seek might not be out there, the perspectives I need most certainly are.

To plan your own journey to the Kootenay Rockies of British Columbia, visit kootenayrockies.com.

