

# Summer peak

Whistler's appeal spans more than skiing, discovers Nikki Bayley



IN WHISTLER

**H**ear a mention of Whistler in British Columbia and your first thoughts are likely to be of perfect-powder skiing and boarding on Olympic-class mountains. And you'd be right – Whistler Blackcomb excels as a winter location.

But when the snow melts it also shines as a summer activity holiday destination. Claiming the crown as one of the world's finest mountain bike hubs, Whistler also boasts stunning alpine and forest hiking, glacier-fed lakes for kayaking, rafting and swimming, as well as excellent kids' facilities, spas, golf courses and destination dining. Just 90 minutes' drive along the scenic Sea to Sky Highway from Vancouver, Whistler is just as exciting in the sunshine as it is in ski season, and worthy of a visit on a western Canada summer itinerary.

## ● DAY ONE

**09.00:** Start your day with a cup of Portland's finest Stumptown

coffee and treats such as caramelised banana brownies or lavender and earl grey scones at the Purebread bakery. Once high on sugar and caffeine, snap selfies at the Olympic Rings on the plaza. [purebread.ca](http://purebread.ca)

**10.00:** Plunge into the ancient coastal temperate rainforest on a guided eco treetop walk with Ziptrek. On this fascinating 90-minute tour you'll walk through the treetops along gently swaying boardwalks and learn about the forest and Whistler's bid to become a sustainable community. A must for photographers, you'll be surrounded by lush forest and imposing mountains in an area untouched since the last ice age. For those seeking something more action-packed, Ziptrek also runs zipline tours in the same area. [ziptrek.com](http://ziptrek.com)

**11.30:** Ask to be dropped off at the Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre on the way back. This fantastic spot showcases the art, history and culture of the Squamish and

Lil'Wat First Nations people who have lived on these lands for generations. Visitors are welcomed with a song and traditional music before being shown a short film. Then it's time for a tour with a First Nations cultural ambassador followed by a hands-on experience with traditional crafts. On Tuesday evenings from May till September, traditional barbecues are held, with treats like cedar plank west coast salmon and bannock. [slcc.ca](http://slcc.ca)

**13.15:** Fuel up for a busy afternoon with lunch at Milestones, which has one of the best outdoor spaces in Blackcomb. Cheery service, good prices and a family-friendly menu make this Canadian chain a popular stop. [milestonesrestaurants.com](http://milestonesrestaurants.com)

**15.00:** Paddle in a single or double kayak, or balance on a Stand Up Paddleboard on a guided excursion with Whistler Eco Tours along the lyrically-named River of Golden Dreams, which takes visitors from Alta Lake through the

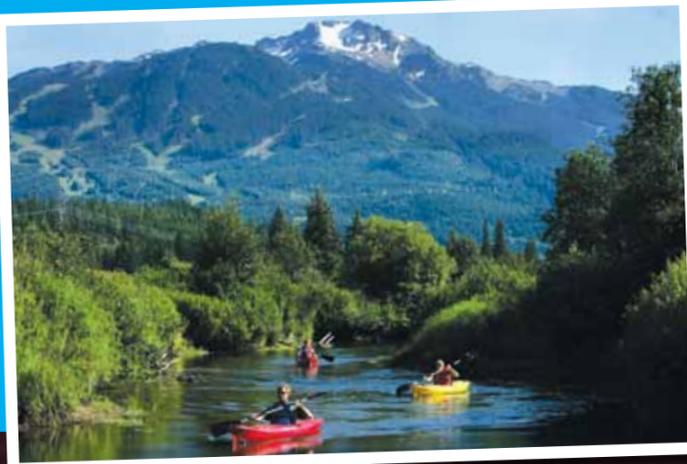
Whistler Wetlands down a glacier river and on to the beautiful Green Lake. These three-hour trips take in stunning scenery with plenty of photo-friendly spots along the way. [whistlerecotours.com](http://whistlerecotours.com)

**18.00:** Stop for post-paddle snacks and a drink at the Dubh Linn Gate pub at the base of Whistler Mountain. They have live music ▶



Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre





every day and one of the most popular sun-drenched patios in the village. If you don't let that one drink turn into several, you've still got time to get out on one of the many hiking trails around the village. The Valley Trail is one of the easiest, or try the Lost Lake trail which is accessed from the Blackcomb side of town.

**dubhlinggate.com**

**20.00:** Splurge on dinner at the Sidecut Modern Steak + Bar at the Four Seasons hotel, which serves fresh-shucked oysters and superb spice rub steaks. For a more budget-friendly option, try Pizzeria Antico for crisp Neapolitan-style pizzas and pastas.

**sidecutwhistler.com**  
**pizzeriaantico.ca**

● **DAY TWO**

**10.00:** Whistler Mountain Bike Park is considered to be the leading lift-accessed bike park in the world and attracts world-class bikers, but even if you've never been downhill mountain biking

before you can still learn the basics in a two-hour session with qualified instructors at Bike Park 101. Adults and teenagers can sign on; prices include lift ticket, dual-suspension bike, helmet, pads and glove rental. Younger riders aged 6-12 can sign up to an all-day kids' camp programme from 9.30am-3.30pm, which includes lunch.

**bike.whistlerblackcomb.com**

**12.15:** Head to Earls Kitchen & Bar for a lunch of pocket-friendly pleasers in a ski lodge-style room with antler chandeliers and plenty of cosy booth seating. Check out the daily food and drinks specials.

**earls.ca**

**13.30:** With four championship golf courses from some of the world's top designers, Whistler is a golfer's paradise. Take advantage of the glorious mountain views and fresh air at any of the superb greens. Golf not your game? Fit in some relaxation in the mountains with a visit to the Scandinave Spa just a few minutes outside the village. Soak away any aches in the beautiful



Barefoot Bistro

outdoor hot pools, saunas and steam rooms.

**scandinave.com**

**16.30:** Race to catch the last 30 minutes of the daily oysters and drinks specials on the sun-soaked patio at Araxi in the village.

**araxi.com**

**18.00:** Make it an evening to remember out in a jeep with bear-watching expert Michael Allen and his team. You'll explore the black bear's habitat of feeding areas, daybeds and dens on a three-hour trip (from £102).

**whistler.com/activities/bear-viewing**

**21.30:** Book in for late night bites and a visit to the Ketel One Vodka Room – at -32C the coldest vodka tasting room in the world – at the Bearfoot Bistro. It also boasts some of the best food in town, thanks to talented chef Melissa Craig. Later on, the Bearfoot switches from restaurant to club with DJs replacing the dinner-time pianist.

**bearfootbistro.com TW**



## WHISTLER: WHERE TO STAY

**Splurge: Four Seasons Whistler**  
Over on the Blackcomb side of the village, the gloriously well-appointed Four Seasons has a family-friendly outdoor pool, gym, spa and excellent on-site dining options. Rooms are spacious, with balconies overlooking the mountains. Daily guest programmes include wine tastings at the chef's table and kids' activities. One-bed premier room summer rates start at about £408.

**fourseasons.com**



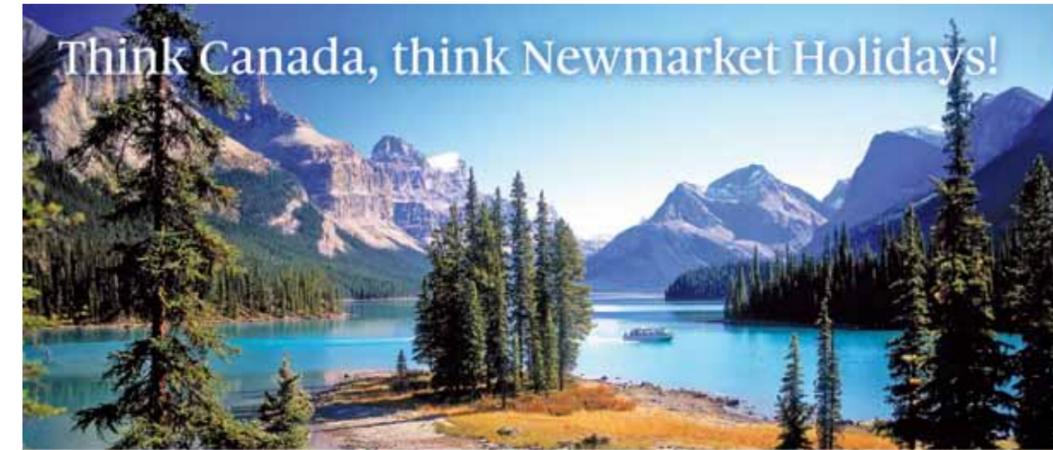
**Spend: Nita Lake Lodge**  
Five minutes' drive from Whistler – with an on-demand shuttle service – Nita Lake Lodge offers a luxurious getaway with jaw-clangingly gorgeous lake and mountains views. Free kayaks, paddleboards and canoes are on offer from the lodge's private dock. Rooms boast fireplaces and private balconies, with lavish bathrooms, and microwave and tea and coffee facilities. One-bed lake view room summer rates start from about £160.

**nitalakelodge.com**



**Save: Aava**  
Steps from the heart of Whistler village with direct access to the Valley Trail, the Aava is a bike-friendly hotel, with a bike valet, bike wash and tool shop, plus freeGoPro hire and two hours of free cruiser bike rental for guests. Spotlessly clean basic one-bed rooms have kitchenettes. The suntrap patio pool overlooks the mountains. Deluxe king room-only summer rates start at about £98.

**aavawhistlerhotel.com**



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