

casual dining

# Ladies WHO LUNCH

Making the most of the mid-day meal during your girls' getaway

**THINK OF** “ladies who lunch” and you’ll likely conjure up images of 60-something philanthropists at “the club,” noshing on Waldorf salads. It’s a little different in Whistler. The lunching ladies can just as easily be a group of girlfriends fresh off the hill as a crowd of the town’s movers and shakers.

Whistler, where indulgence and delight go when they take a vacation, is a place of many choices. You and your party can fuel up between runs, take a treat break, or use a wonderful location as an excuse to get together.

Check out these haute, hot haunts. They are perfect for catching up or for preparing for world domination. Or they’re good for simply hanging out with friends and fellow shopping enthusiasts.

Ready for anything that lunch can throw at them, three women of Whistler put this to the test by sampling the varied and delicious ways they can keep their friendship on the menu. >>

CURE LOUNGE

story by CINDY FILIPENKO PHOTOS BY DAVID BUZZARD



GARIBALDI LIFT CO.



## **GARIBALDI LIFT CO. BAR & GRILL WHISTLER GONDOLA BASE**

Ladies who ski need to lunch. After a morning on the mountain, it's time to fuel up at the GLC Bar & Grill, one of Whistler's true ski-in, ski-out locations.

"You can come down the mountain, walk in wearing your ski boots, have lunch and be back on the mountain in no time," says Mike Varrin, manager of bars for Whistler Blackcomb.

Hit the GLC on a sunny day with your friends and enjoy lunching on one of Whistler's largest patios. Specializing in share plates, this popular après location serves up wicked Rustic Flat Breads, amazing Szechuan Calamari and Chicken T'n'A — "boneless chicken wings" made from breast and thigh meat.

For fiercer appetites, there are burgers, pasta and interesting takes on the classics like the fantastic Karaage Fish 'N' Chips. As well, the kitchen is always happy to create vegetarian and vegan options.

Of course, you may opt to give the hill a miss and indulge in a house specialty: The Runaway Lunch, where you eat and drink through to dinner. It's not unusual for people



## **CBBG** CINNAMON BEAR BAR & GRILLE

Unwind with a cool beverage around the cozy fireplace in one of Whistler's iconic après bars, catch the game on the big screen or enjoy a relaxing Pacific Northwest dinner while soaking up the Village vibe.

Located at Hilton  
Whistler Resort & Spa.



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who arrive at lunch to be seen dancing in ski boots when the GLC transforms into a happening nightclub with DJs and live music.

For more info: [www.whistlerblackcomb.com](http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com)

**FIREROCK LOUNGE  
WESTIN RESORT & SPA**

Tucked away in the Westin Resort & Spa at the south end of the Village, FireRock Lounge has an intimate, cozy mountain lodge feel. Have something you want to keep on the down low? Spill the beans over some amazing share plates and the Ultimate Mimosa. (An inspired concoction, the Ultimate Mimosa contains a full bottle of Prosecco and comes with as many champagne flutes as needed.)

Amy Stofmeel, The FireRock’s general manager, says many people seek the bar out because it’s off the beaten path. “They know they can find a corner to talk, have a cocktail and enjoy some great food.”

That great food consists of a menu full of upscale versions of comfort classics such as Deep Cove Pale Ale Short Rib Sliders, Albacore Tuna Tacos and Buffalo Mozzarella Flatbread. Most menu items are perfect for sharing, but you might not want to!

The FireRock also gets bonus points for



FIREROCK LOUNGE

having the sunniest patio in Whistler with a great fire bowl to chase away the chills.

For more info: [www.gibbonshospitality.com](http://www.gibbonshospitality.com) or [www.westinwhistler.com/firerock](http://www.westinwhistler.com/firerock).

**CURE LOUNGE  
NITA LAKE LODGE**

At Cure Lounge you’ll feel like you’re at a resort within a resort. One of two lakeside

lounges in Whistler, Cure’s patio sits just metres above the shoreline of Nita Lake. This hidden gem in Creekside provides the perfect backdrop for a relaxing mid-day getaway.

“It’s a beautiful location,” says Theresa Ginter, the lodge’s general manager. “And we give our guests an experience that reflects that, in both our service and our food.”

With a chef committed to using local, >>

01

**CRYSTAL HUT FONDUE**  
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**01**

STAY WILD



organic and seasonal products, Cure's menu is exceptional. Must-haves include the exquisite burger with Pemberton-grown organic beef, Nita Lake salad, the organic crudité platter, and the exceptional crispy pork belly featuring Fraser Valley pork.

There's plenty of room inside where you and your friends can sink into the deep leather couches by the fireplace to settle in for an inspired lunch. And if lunch extends into après, your party will get to enjoy Whistler's best DJs.

To make it easy to experience Cure, the lodge operates a shuttle service to pick you up from the Village.

For more info: [www.nitalakelodge.com](http://www.nitalakelodge.com)

## SUSHI VILLAGE VILLAGE STROLL

For 30 years, Sushi Village has been serving up Whistler's best Japanese cuisine. And the parties that have taken place over the years in its nine tatami rooms are almost as legendary as the sushi. Privacy and incredibly fresh sushi? Sounds perfect for a ladies' lunch.

Try the house specialties like the SASS roll (an inspired combination of salmon, avocado and soya bean sheet with a tempura prawn

thrown in for good measure) hot pots and udon noodle soups. And the spicy agedashi tofu? It's not to be missed.

"We regularly get requests from the culinary magazines asking for the recipe for the tofu spicy sauce. We always give it to them — but with a couple of ingredients missing," laughs Amy Huddle, general manager of Sushi Village.

Huddle won the 2014 Bearfoot Bistro's Bloody Caesar competition with a cocktail that featured this secret sauce. Ask nicely and the bartender might make you one.

Rather order off the menu? Try a pitcher — or three — of the strawberry sake margaritas, but beware, these margas can pack as much of a wallop as their Mexican counterparts.

For more info: [www.sushivillage.com](http://www.sushivillage.com)

## THE ROYAL TASTE OF INDIA MARKETPLACE

Looking to spice up lunch with your besties? Then you'll want to check out The Royal Taste of India with its mix of northern and southern Indian food.

Highlighting the great regional cuisines of India, this locals' go-to place for Indian offers a tremendous number of vegetarian/vegan

dishes and mild to hot spicing options.


The Royal Taste of India's owner, Jinder Nijar, knows spice. Whether it's Chicken Korma, Prawn Vindaloo or a Channa Curry, at the heart of every Indian main dish is the masala.

His masala consists of more than 32 different whole herbs and spices. The masala is ground on a weekly basis to ensure freshness.

"India is well-known as the land of spices and yogis. Every spice has its own medicinal value, which is very beneficial for modern living," says Nijar. "Spices are to enhance the flavour of food, as well as promote healthy living."

A group of girlfriends could leave yoga class and continue to joyfully feed their inner cores, this time literally, by sharing a few dishes together. Namaste!

From Naan bread cooked to pillowy perfection in a charcoal-fuelled, clay tandoor oven, to a delicate Gulab Jamun dessert, The Royal Taste of India creates delectable, authentic Indian food prepared by accomplished, well-seasoned chefs.

Healthy living has never tasted so delicious. For more info: [www.theroyaltasteofindia.com](http://www.theroyaltasteofindia.com) 



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# Fresh tracks

— compiled by Cindy Filipenko



GABI MOELLER PHOTOGRAPHY

## SKATE UNDER THE STARS

➤ **SKATING OUTDOORS** on frozen waterways is a Canadian tradition. It's the stuff of postcards and childhood memories. Glide away at Whistler Olympic Plaza while ice skating on our community rink. It's free, daily from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. from mid-December through to the end of March. What's more, you can experience skating under a dazzling, clear blue winter sky or at night under the stars in the heart of Whistler Village. And don't worry about beginner skaters in your family, instructors are onsite. Forgot your skates? Rentals are available for \$5. [www.whistler.ca](http://www.whistler.ca)

## G-FORCE FUN



SCOTT BRAMMER, WWW.COASTPHOTO.COM

**L**ive your Olympic dream at the Whistler Sliding Centre. Professional bobsled drivers take groups of three through 10 of the track's 16 corners at speeds of up to 125 km/h. You'll feel the G-Force and experience the same thrills as the athletes who tackled this run at the 2010 Winter Olympics. Not thrilling enough? You can choose to take the driver's seat yourself by going solo on a luge — essentially a platform with blades on which you lay down to ride — tearing around six corners of the track at up to 100 km/h. One of only 16 bobsled tracks in the world, the Whistler Sliding Centre offers visitors a rare opportunity to experience winter's fastest sports. [www.whistlerslidingcentre.com](http://www.whistlerslidingcentre.com)

## Winter's Best Motor Sport



MINECRANE PHOTOGRAPHY.COM

➤ **WHETHER YOU'RE** an experienced or first-time rider, you can get on a snowmobile and explore Whistler and the surrounding region. There are several companies in the area that offer snowmobiling experiences. Some companies hold clinics to help you gain skills and confidence for sledding, while others specialize in backcountry trips that range from the rugged to the refined, with additions like candle-lit fondue dinners. Ride the trails through ancient forests, travel further into the backcountry than you ever imagined or zip across a glacier — the choice is yours. [www.canadianwilderness.com](http://www.canadianwilderness.com), [blackcomb-snowmobile.com](http://blackcomb-snowmobile.com) and [tagwhistler.com](http://tagwhistler.com)

## Indulge Yourself

**W**hether you need to recover after a grueling day on the slopes or just want a little pampering, Whistler has no shortage of spas. Most of the major hotels have them and others can be found around the Village. Many facilities offer a full line of esthetic treatments from brow tinting to eco-friendly mani-pedis. Full-body treatment options are also plentiful and include Javanese, Lomi and hot stone massages, body wraps featuring locally sourced botanicals and Vichy showers. Most spas offer half- or full-day packages for the ultimate in relaxation and restoration. If you're looking for a unique spa experience, check out Scandinave, a Finnish-style spa with steam and dry saunas, outdoor hot and cool pools and massage facilities.



COURTESY THE ADVENTURE GROUP





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## SKIING ISN'T ALWAYS DOWNHILL

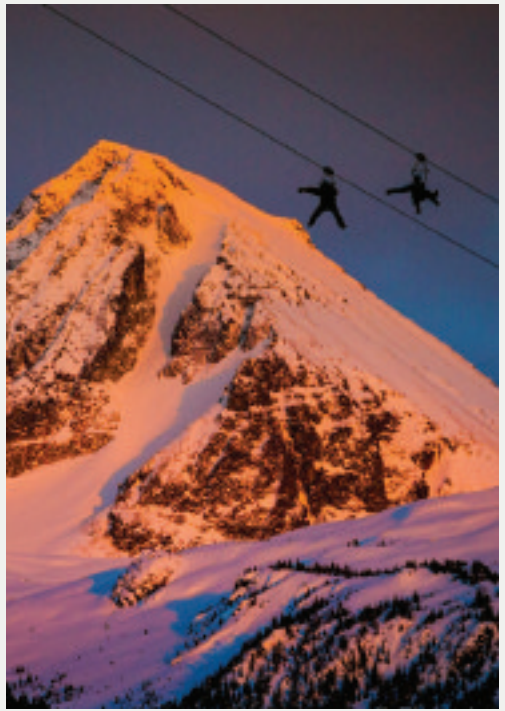
**C**ross-country skiing, the original Nordic Track trainer, is more than great exercise — it's a passport to some of the prettiest vistas Whistler has to offer. There are two areas designated for this rigorous sport: Lost Lake, which is within the Village, and Whistler Olympic Park (WOP), 23 km south of the resort. The 32 km of trails at Lost Lake provides skiers with beautiful alpine views while the 130 km of trails at WOP take skiers deep into pristine forests. Both facilities offer night skiing options on a limited number of lit trails. Rentals are available onsite at Lost Lake and WOP. [www.crosscountryconnection.ca](http://www.crosscountryconnection.ca)



GABI MOELLER PHOTOGRAPHY

### A sleigh ride TOGETHER

**H**orse-drawn sleigh rides — immortalized in song and on Christmas cards — are a great way for the whole family to enjoy a Whistler winter. Both mountain and valley rides are available. The mountain ride will take you through a Blackcomb Mountain forest while the valley tour takes place at Nicklaus North Golf Course offering amazing views of Green Lake and the surrounding mountains. Wrapped in a cozy blanket with hot chocolate in hand, you and your family will take in the beauty of Whistler while enjoying the tranquility that comes with gliding over the snow. [www.blackcombsleighrides.com](http://www.blackcombsleighrides.com)



COURTESY THE ADVENTURE GROUP

## Such GREAT Heights

➤ ADD A ZIP trekking adventure to your vacation; it's the closest thing to flying you can experience without wings.

Whistler has some of the longest, highest and fastest zipline tours in the world. The resort's two zip trek providers offer very different experiences, making it tempting to try both! In the Village, you'll find Ziptrek Eco Tours ready to zip you through the forest shared by Blackcomb and Whistler mountains. Experiences range from their two-and-a-half hour signature Bear Tour to the four-and-a-half hour, 10-zipline Mammoth Tour. Their new line, Sasquatch, has closed for the winter but will reopen in the spring.

A few minutes north of the Village you'll find Superfly Ziplines located on spectacular Cougar Mountain. If you've got a need for speed, Superfly features two side-by-side 1 km-long ziplines that are 150 m. (650 ft.) above the forest floor; they can attain speeds of up to 100 km/hr. Contact either provider to verify age and weight requirements. [www.ziptrek.com](http://www.ziptrek.com) or [www.superflyziplines.com](http://www.superflyziplines.com)

## SOARING AND SALMON

➤ IN BRACKENDALE, south of Whistler, the new year means the return of the eagle. This year marks the 30th annual Brackendale Eagle Festival and Count from Jan. 1 to Jan. 31, when thousands of bald eagles return to the region to feast on salmon. The 2016 count takes place on Sunday, Jan. 10, but the festival continues throughout the month with concerts, an art show, guided tours and information sessions about the region's eagles. Enthusiasts can view these magnificent birds from the dykes along the Squamish River all month. Don't forget your camera and binoculars. [www.brackendaleartgallery.com](http://www.brackendaleartgallery.com)



SCOTT BRAMMER, WWW.COASTPHOTO.COM

## fresh tracks



JUSTA JESKOVA

# An Open Invitation

oving your time in Whistler this winter? Then come back and visit us in the summer! When you are surrounded by green mountaintops instead of white, the fun is a little different but just as exciting. Vertical takes on new meaning as mountain bikers take to the hill, culminating with Crankworx, July's two-week celebration of two-wheeled fun. Namaste becomes the official greeting when Wanderlust comes to Whistler to celebrate all things yoga. Free concerts, featuring groups as diverse as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Blue Rodeo, fill the plaza most weekend nights. And crowds on Village restaurant patios are bustling.

But it takes more than festivals and free entertainment to make a Whistler summer rock. From the brutal obstacle race known as Tough Mudder, to the 120-km GranFondo road bike ride, high-profile sporting events fill the summer calendar. And for those inspired to similar heart-pumping recreation there's bungee jumping, river rafting, summer bobsledding and the world-class Whistler Mountain Bike Park.

Looking for something generating a little less adrenaline? You can take an easy ride on a gondola to the top of Blackcomb or Whistler mountains for an alpine hike, enjoy a gelato on the Stroll or head to one of Whistler's beloved lakes for a splash.

And if you're attending the Squamish or Pemberton music festivals this summer, Whistler is a great home base, with the hotels and amenities available to cap off a perfect weekend listening to your favourite performers. [www.tourismwhistler.com](http://www.tourismwhistler.com).

## A peaceful walk IN THE SNOW

Snowshoeing is an easy and fun way to enjoy Whistler winters. No matter what age or fitness level you're at, if you can walk, you can snowshoe. Snowshoes allow you to tread lightly and easily, lofted above the snow along set trails or through the forest. You can enjoy snowshoeing in the Village at Lost Lake, which features 32 km of trails, 12 of which have been designated specifically for snowshoeing. If you're looking for a little more terrain, check out Whistler Olympic Park, a 23-minute drive south of the resort. The park features 40 km of marked trails, 15 of which are also dog friendly. Rentals are available onsite.

[www.whistlersportslegacies.com](http://www.whistlersportslegacies.com) or [www.whistler.ca](http://www.whistler.ca)



JUSTA JESKOVA



MIKEGRANIEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

## TERRIFIC TUBING

➤ FLYING DOWN A hill on a toboggan is an experience as Canadian as... well, Canadian bacon. Most kids in this country remember what it's like to slide down the snow pile at the end of the street, dreaming of higher, steeper inclines. The Coca-Cola Tube Park takes that experience and dials it up.

Riders in single-passenger tubes fly down sliding lanes 1,000-ft (305-metre) long, hitting speeds of more than 60 km/h. But it's a thrilling ride even preschool children can enjoy with the park's Mini-Zone featuring shorter runs and smaller tubes. (Children must be at least three years old and 36" tall.) A conveyor makes it fast and easy for tubers of all ages to get up the hill. The tube park is open every day from noon to 8 p.m., opening an hour earlier on Wednesdays and holidays. [www.whistlerblackcomb.com](http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com)

## Chairlifts to Heaven

There are two mighty reasons why Whistler is consistently recognized as North America's #1 ski and snowboarding resort: Whistler and Blackcomb mountains. There's efficient access to both mountains via the Peak 2 Peak Gondola — an 11-minute ride across a 4.4 km span that stretches 436 m above the valley floor. And with the installation of new eight-person cabins on the Whistler Village Gondola system, skiers and boarders have extra time on some of the world's most beautiful slopes. Lift stations are located in the Village, the Upper Village and at Creekside. [www.whistlerblackcomb.com](http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com)

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AWARD WINNING:



GUEST APPROVED:





# Mountain Roots

LOCAL BUSINESSES,  
LOCAL LOVE

**S** hopping locally has never been easier and these community-minded, independent businesses make Whistler an exciting and vibrant place to shop, eat and live.

— Pina Belperio



ANDREW STRAIN

## WHISTLER-INSPIRED PROTECTION

➤ NIBZ BANDANAS, started by local boarder Sara Niblock, celebrates its 10th season of protecting faces from Mother Nature. Its funky collection of high-quality, weatherproof bandanas, headbands and balaclavas are created by riders for riders. The use of wicking mesh prevents moisture and ice build-up, making these products perfectly suited to handle Whistler's unpredictable weather. They're also the choice of Whistler athlete and X-Games skier Simon D'Artois. Available at Evolution Whistler or [nibz.ca](http://nibz.ca)



KRISTEN MCCAUGHEY

## WHERE FRIENDS GATHER

➤ CAMP LIFESTYLE + COFFEE CO. is designer Lynn Gentile's way of combining great coffee with mindfully sourced lifestyle products, geared to the sustainable yet curious. Set in Whistler's hip Function Junction area, Camp has become the new gathering space. Savour the fresh brew of 49th Parallel coffee and tasty treats and relax by the outdoor waterfall, or browse Camp's unique West Coast artisan products that include Marley's Stereos, Dot & Lil soaps, Portland Growler Co., FIG Clothing and Loyal Loot's colourful log bowls. [camplifestyle.ca](http://camplifestyle.ca)

## NATURE'S MULTI-VITAMIN

➤ A CHICKEN IS what a chicken eats. Vitala Foods' nutrient-rich eggs are the first in the world to contain 100 per cent of your daily-dose of Vitamin D, thanks to their specially formulated chicken feed. Vitala Eggs come from free-run hens and are packed full of essential nutrients, including vitamins E and B12, and selenium. Family-run Vitala Foods is located in Abbotsford, B.C. It pays homage to the way things used to be and also produce milk and yoghurt products that are healthy, innovative and traceable. Eggs sold exclusively at Whistler's Creekside Market. [vitalafoods.com](http://vitalafoods.com)



## JEWELLERY FOR A GOOD CAUSE

➤ KEIR FINE JEWELLERY'S unique line of circular pendants and earrings commemorates Jeanie the Whistler Bear, a 20-year Whistler resident and wildlife icon adored by both visitors and locals. Launched in August 2015, this Canadian-designed, made and sourced line is available in sterling silver or 14K yellow gold with a Canadian diamond. Ten per cent of each piece sold will be donated to the Get Bear Smart Society, which educates people about the animals. [keirfinejewellery.com](http://keirfinejewellery.com)





Left: Ryan Smith of Buffalo Bills mixes up a revamped classic, the Deep Cove Cosmopolitan.

Right: The Old Fashioned from Hy's Steakhouse, topped with fruit slices.



"I don't like muddling. I think muddling is a waste of time," he says, recalling that after he won bartender of the year in *Pique Newsmagazine's* Best of Whistler competition, he was asked what his best drink was.

"I said, 'a mug of Canadian — I make sure I have a nice cold mug, and then I pour it in,'" he says with a laugh. "You just kind of give people what they want."

A nice, cold beer would do me fine most days, but today I'm on the search for something sweeter. Big Rich has me covered — his unique signature Sangria should do just the trick.

"It's a build and shake, which is unusual with sangria," Poehlmann says. "We build it with red wine, a dash of melon liqueur, a dash of brandy, and this combo of mango, orange juice and pineapple juice."

It hits my taste buds with all the force of an alcoholic fruit salad — it's sweet, but not aggressively so.

I could do worse than to order up another, but my curiosity is piqued, and before long I'm off in search of more.

When you sit down at the **HY'S STEAKHOUSE** bar you can expect a bit of a show — bartenders Greg Martin and Patrice Sarrazin are seasoned vets behind the taps.

"When it gets busy, you're serving drinks at the bar plus you're serving 20 waiters," Martin says. "You're moving at a good pace, and people love seeing that. It's like a dance."

Hy's Steakhouse — a franchise that celebrated its

60th anniversary in 2015 — tends to attract a more sophisticated clientele. The classics — martinis, manhattans and the rest — are par for the course. To satisfy your sweet tooth, Martin says, order the Old Fashioned (with fruit).

According to Cameron Coull, lead bartender at the **FOUR SEASONS' SIDECUT RESTAURANT**, sweet is a hard target to hit.

"Everyone is into savoury, citrus, boozy, so sweet is kind of getting lost along the way," Coull says. "So to create a sweet cocktail that is going to be accepted is quite difficult."

But with his custom-made "Magic Carpet" cocktail, Coull nails it. A house-made cinnamon chocolate liqueur, Sortilege Maple Whiskey and a vanilla-bean-infused Crystal Head vodka all team up to make Coull's creation a memorable one.

**BRANDY'S AT THE KEG** is a "chameleon of the bar world," says bar manager Aaron Hopps. "We're always shifting from après and after ski to full-on lobster and steak dinners."

He also refers to it as "the best sports bar in town."

And when the sun goes down, the party continues — Brandy's is the only bar in town that's open until 2 a.m.

"It's definitely an industry bar. We get a lot of people coming in that are bartenders, servers, managers, owners, so they know what they like to drink, they know what they're coming in for."