

awayfinder

adventures in the northwest

Fall • 2007

Osoyoos: BC's desert destination

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Take a sip.

Judy Fulkerson - Special to awayfinder
photos courtesy of Destination Osoyoos

Just five minutes across the Canadian border the waters of Canada's warmest lake lure visitors. Astounding golf courses challenge even the most seasoned swingers and bountiful orchards offer incredible harvests. Within this lush green oasis you'll find Osoyoos - a small town that offers a "to do" list as long as the fertile valley it calls home.

Hiking, biking, shopping, dining, touring wineries, golfing, relaxing by the lake or skiing at Mount Baldy once the snow flies - all this and more is yours for the asking in this flourishing four-season desert destination.

Desert? In Canada? That's right. Osoyoos is located at the southern tip of the Okanagan Valley, in what is the only desert in Canada. Although this region receives the lowest rainfall in the country, thanks to incredible feats of irrigation, today the region is

with fresh plums, prunes, pears, apples, peppers and cucumbers.

Accommodations range from cozy townhouses - complete with BBQs on the patio and a place for your favorite pet, to the "activities and services for all ages" Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites Village on the Lake at Osoyoos Lake. Rooms here range from a Regular Room with one or two queen beds, to Condo Suites that are set up like a home away from home and include everything from a can opener to a Kids' Suite. Guests also enjoy the hotel's private beach, marina with boats for rent and a family restaurant and fine-dining lounge.

Holiday Inn spokesman Vince Virks says that many guests schedule golf trips this time of year.

"Go a few miles in any direction and you'll find a golf course,"



If you enjoy fine wines, "go for the gold" along the Golden Mile when you visit the Osoyoos area.

known for the premium wine grapes that support its 17 estate wineries.

Autumn is a particularly great time of year to visit Osoyoos, as harvest is in full swing, placing emphasis on the region's delectable food and award-winning wines. The warm sunshine makes for pleasant trips to the outdoor produce stands stocked

he promises. These include the picturesque Osoyoos Golf and Country Club, which General Manager Randy LaRoche says been expanded from 27 to 36 holes. Golfers enjoy breathtaking views of the lake, and surrounding vineyards, orchards and desert.

There's also the Sonora Dunes Golf Course, a 9-hole desert-link style course

Destination Directory

Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites
Village on the Lake
1-877-786-7773
holidayinosoyoos.com

Nk'Mip Resort
1-888-966-5647
www.nkmip.com

Spirit Ridge Vineyard
Resort & Spa
1-877-313-WINE (9463)
spiritridge.ca

Sonora Desert Spa
250-495-2119
sonoradesertspa.com

DoLci Deli & Catering
Company
250-495-6807
dolcideli.com

Ambrosia Family Restaurant
250-495-2227

Osoyoos Home Hardware
250-495-6534
Osoyooshomehardware.ca

Burrowing Owl Estate Winery
1-877-498-0620
bovwine.ca

Twisted Tree Vineyards
and Winery
250-495-5161
twistedtree.ca

featuring fairways lined with sage, greasewood and cactus. The course is just one part of the magnificent, \$100 million Nk'Mip ("inca-meep") Resort operated by the Osoyoos Indian Band. The business also includes the Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort and Spa, Nk'Mip Cellars and the Nk'Mip Campground and RV Park.

Not to be missed is the new Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre. The building, tucked into a hillside, features a combination of indoor and outdoor galleries with interactive stations and hands-on displays.

Take a d

Surrounding the cultural center are self-guided interpretive trails that wind through 50 acres of the Great Basin Desert.

Away from the Interpretive Centre visitors will find several other opportunities to explore the Osoyoos area via trail systems.

To discover the softer side of Osoyoos pay a visit to the brand new Sonora Desert Spa at the Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort. With nine treatment rooms and a full array of services including massage, facials and manicures, the spa is yet another attraction of the Nk'Mip Resort.

For shoppers, downtown Osoyoos is home to a colorful array of cafes, stores and restaurants. Dolci serves fresh croissants and fresh coffee brewed from locally roasted beans. And Ambrosia, a cozy diner located along motel row, offers both western and East Indian cuisine.

Another downtown attraction is the unique Osoyoos Home Hardware store. Osoyoos Home Hardware includes a



Fresh fruit and sunshine - Osoyoos has a plentiful supply of both.

fully functional kitchen where people who want to improve their culinary skills can plunk down \$10 to register for a cooking class right there in the store, with chefs using local produce and wines.

Other fun places to check out include Unity, a locally owned board shop, and Stedman's, a downtown department store emphasizing clothing and

p. Take a trip.



Bring your bikes and take a spin along the Lakeshore Drive paved shared-use trail.

some décor. And you'll find casual attire featuring 2010 Winter Olympic logos - being held in Whistler, B.C., at the Visitor Centre in Osoyoos.

Speaking of Olympics, "going for the gold" is another fantastic way to get a taste of the locally grown goods. Trekking along the "Golden Mile" - named for the richness of the land between Osoyoos and the nearby town of Oliver, about 15 minutes to the north - to some of the area's wineries is sure to tantalize your tastebuds. Among the most renowned are the Burrowing Owl Estate Winery in Oliver and Nk'Mip Cellars in Osoyoos.

Located near the north end of Osoyoos Lake, Burrowing Owl occupies a dramatic vantage point in the middle of the vineyard, with a fine dining restaurant and a guesthouse featuring 10 private guest rooms.

Nk'Mip Cellars has the distinction of being North America's first Aboriginal-owned and operated winery. Tours are offered at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Twisted Tree Vineyards and Winery is a family-owned business that produces small quantities of hand-crafted, premium wines. It's one of the newer wineries in Osoyoos, and visitors can now stop in to the recently opened tasting room.

Tourists looking for a one-stop wine shopping experience will want to schedule their autumn getaway to coincide with the 11th Annual Festival of the Grape, Sunday, Sept. 30, at the Oliver Community Park. The festival includes the popular grape stomp event in which competing teams stamp and squish up a storm of pulpy purple goo.

"This is not a clean sport!" warns Michelle Jefferson, communications/media relations coordinator for Destination Osoyoos, the town's economic development organization. The Festival of the Grape is just one part of the 27th Annual Okanagan Wine Festival, featuring dozens of wine tastings, dinners and tours around the Okanagan Valley. It kicks off Sept. 28 and runs through Oct. 7. For a Wine Festival schedule visit owfs.com.

This beautiful desert oasis is waiting, just a few minutes across the Canadian border. Go on. Take a trip. Take a dip. Take a sip.

Things to do Upcoming Fall Events

Market on Main: Market held each Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Osoyoos Town Hall Square on Main Street. Features a variety of homemade goods and local produce.

Wine Tours: Now through Oct. 28. Half- or full-day tours available featuring local wineries, agriculture and other attractions. For details or to book a tour visit destinationosoyoos.com/packages or call (250)495-3366 or 888-676-9667.

Tinhorn Creek Concert: Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. "Spirit of the West" performs at Tinhorn Creek Winery located south of Oliver. Details/tickets call 888-484-6467.

Similkameen Sizzle Pepper Festival: Sept. 15. Annual pepper festival at Memorial Park. Artists, vendors, celebrity chefs, children's games, beer and wine garden and more. Chili cookoff, hot pepper eating contest, dinner dance. Call (250)499-5225 for details.

Drag Races: Sept 15-16, 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. Time trials at 11 a.m., racing at 1 p.m. Spectators welcome (bring lawn chair). For info call (250) 498-8309.

Celebrate Osoyoos Festival: Sept. 22, 5-8 p.m. British Columbia Visitor Centre. Open house and salmon bake. Also featuring international dishes prepared by local restaurants and world-class wine from Osoyoos wineries. For more information call Destination Osoyoos (250) 495-3366, ext. 208.

Fall Wine Festival: Sept. 28 - Oct. 7. Ten day celebration held throughout the Okanagan Valley during grape harvest. Over 150 special events including vineyard tours, wine tastings, lunches and dinners. Visit TheWineFestivals.com/Okanaganwinecountry for schedule. Or call the Okanagan Wine Festivals Society at (250) 861-6654.

Festival of the Grape: Sept. 30, noon to sundown. Wine tasting, exhibit booths, games and grape stomp competition. Dozens of wineries represented. For tickets call (250) 498-6321.

Oktoberfest: Oct. 13. Gourmet Bavarian feast, entertainment and dancing. For info call Destination Osoyoos (250) 495-3366.

Getting there

To reach Osoyoos, take Highway 95 north toward Canada. When you reach the intersection of Highway 3, turn left. Osoyoos is located at the junctions of Highways 3 and 97. It is approximately 191 miles from Spokane to Osoyoos.

Find an extended version of this story plus:
family friendly events • expanded destination information
all online at osoyofirsteronline.com



OKANAGAN VALLEY BRITISH COLUMBIA

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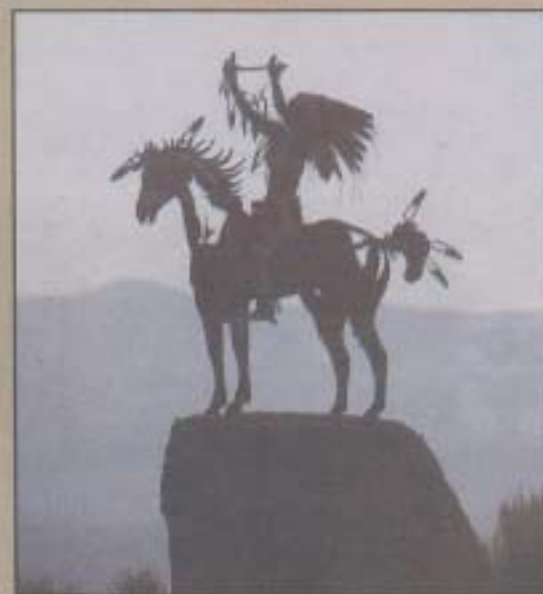
Ever wonder what happens when you cross the line? Traveling north on Hwy 97 through the US/Canada border at Oroville, WA brings you to Osoyoos, British Columbia, one of the warmest places in Canada...and we're not just talking about the weather. You'll find that the warmth of our welcome matches the warmth of our climate. Osoyoos has been welcoming visitors to our small, friendly, lakeside community for over 50 years and we are extending an invitation to you to 'cross the line' and come visit us this fall.

Our shops, restaurants, wineries, activities and attractions are all geared to helping you make the most of a quick and easy getaway vacation to our safe destination. With over 1000 accommodation rooms and over 800 camping/RV sites, you'll find plenty to choose from at this

less hectic time of year.

Our community celebrates a close partnership with our neighbours the Osoyoos Indian Band (part of the Okanagan/Okanogan Nation which extends into Washington State) who have created Nk'Mip Resort (www.nkmip.com) with Spirit Ridge resort hotel and spa, award winning Nk'Mip Cellars winery, Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre, scenic Sonora Dunes golf course and the lakeside Nk'Mip RV park.

The community of Osoyoos and the resort area of Nk'Mip offer so much for you to experience. The harvest festivals are in full swing through October and the Okanagan Fall Wine Festival (September 28 - October 1) is recognized as one of the 100 best events in North America by the American Bus Association.



Chief

Discover Osoyoos



NK'MIP Desert Cultural Centre

Discover
the lands, the legends, the people



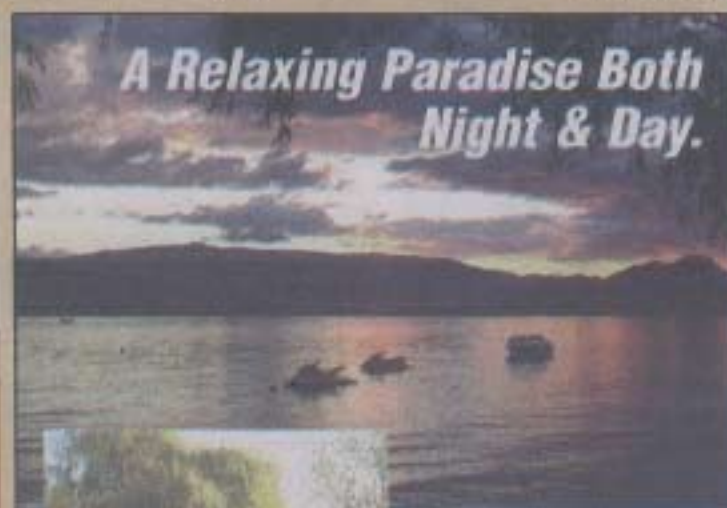
Our 20,000 square-foot interpretative centre features interactive and fun activities for the whole family.

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www.nkmipdesert.com

1000 Rancher Creek Road
Osoyoos, BC
250.495.7901
888.495.8555



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