

**B.C.**  
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**GETTING THERE FROM HERE**

The Peace Arch is lovely and all, but it's no fun waiting in line for a couple of hours because everyone in Washington decides to visit Canada on the same day. And if you have plans to be someplace at a specific time, delays can be disastrous. There's an easy fix: take the train. Two round-trip tickets on the Amtrak Cascades will set you back a measly \$75, and you can leave the driving to the conductor. Another benefit: Customs is a snap once you get to Vancouver (on the way home, the train stops at the border for U.S. customs). We were dropped off at Seattle's King Street station (thanks for the ride, KK) at 7:10 a.m. to catch the 7:40 a.m. train. That gave us plenty of time to get boarding passes, a surprisingly simple process. We settled in and kicked back for the four-hour ride with lovely views of Puget Sound and Skagit County farmland.

Canadian customs at Vancouver's Pacific Central Station is quick and easy (and their customs officers are actually pleasant). The Main Street Sky Train Station is conveniently located just across the street, providing easy access to downtown, the airport, and other communities around the city. If you're taking the Rocky Mountaineer Whistler Sea to Sky Climb train to Whistler, you'll have to use coach service or a taxi to get to that station in North Vancouver. The Sea to Sky Climb is one of the most acclaimed train rides on the planet, and features five-star service along with the beautiful landscapes and ubiquitous wildlife. Look for package deals that include accommodations and expect to pay between \$200 and \$500 for two days during summer and fall. You can also load your package with tours, passes, and access to various attractions.

We opted to rent a car in Vancouver since we were planning on spending a couple of days on the Sunshine Coast after we visited Whistler. Picking up a rental car in downtown Vancouver costs nearly twice as much as renting a car in the suburbs. We found an Enterprise office on Southwest Marine Drive (between downtown Vancouver and the airport) that was within walking distance of the Sky Train. We purchased two-zone Sky Train passes for \$3.75 each and hopped on for a pleasant half-hour ride to pick up the rental car. Though we could have easily hoofed it from the Sky Train to the Enterprise Office, the good folks at Enterprise offered to pick us up. By 2:00 p.m., we were headed to Whistler on the gorgeous Sea to Sky Highway in our bright red Nissan Versa.

**WHISTLER, B.C.**  
Alta Lake and Mt. London were the original names of Whistler and Whistler Mountain, but the settlers started calling the area "Whistley" because of the shrill whistle made by the western hoary marmots who live among the rocks (that's "hoary" - with an "a" but no "w" - referring to the silver-grey fur on the critter's shoulders).

Whistler is best known today as a tony ski resort and host of the skiing and sliding events for the 2010 Winter Olympics. Whistler is a world-class winter resort, that also offers a number of things to keep the summer and fall traveler busy including hiking, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, aerial sightseeing, ATV tours, wildlife viewing tours, golfing, horseback riding, zip-lining, bungee jumping, jeep tours, shopping, and dining with over 200 shops and 90 restaurants. Whew. And I forgot to

mention the most popular summer/fall sport of all: downhill mountain biking.

**BAREFOOT BISTRO**

The Barefoot Bistro (BB), located in the heart of Whistler Village, is my version of dining perfection. I love food elevated to art, but I'm not so crazy about establishments that make eating artsy food overly complicated (just because I know which fork to use doesn't mean I al-

The BB show is produced by ringmaster André Saint-Jacques and executive chef Melissa Craig. They make the perfect duo. André is part raconteur and all showman. Think the P.T. Barnum of haute cuisine. Melissa, on the other hand, lets her food do the talking and, trust me, the food has something to say.

André, among other talents, holds the Guinness world record for most wines sipped in one minute (21), and he's happy to share that talent

the steps, it's like getting into the VIP room of a trendy club. The analogy isn't far from wrong. The cellar has a sound system and comfy couches, and I'm told it's been the site of considerable debauchery.

The wine collection is stunning. I didn't know where to look first. The cellar contains over 20,000 bottles, 2,100 labels, and some of the most impressive verticals in the world, including 20 years of Château Mouton-Rothschild. You can buy a bottle of 1964 Domaine De La Romanée-Conti for a cool \$20,000 if you're in town for a special occasion. There are also numerous excellent wines from all over the world that are a bit more reasonably priced.

The superlative staff served up the seven-course menu with choreographed precision. The food was absolute perfection, and the wine pairings preternatural. Highlights included the fennel-crusted yellowfin tuna micoise with olive tapenade, green beans, and quail egg, the Québec foie gras, and the nitro ice cream with sundae toppings. The nitro ice cream was whipped up dramatically at our table by the dreamy pastry chef Dominic Fortin using real-life liquid nitrogen that gives the concoction a lovely silky texture and sends fog bubbling off like dry ice. The Barefoot Bistro is a must-experience in Whistler.



Scandinave Spa, Whistler



Grilled salmon at the West Coast Wilderness Lodge



West Coast Wilderness Lodge Zodiac boat tour of the Skookumchuck Narrows

**ADARA HOTEL**  
The Adara Hotel is located across the street from the Barefoot Bistro and about 3,000 feet from Whistler Mountain. The village stroll - a meandering pedestrian thoroughfare meant to resemble a mountain stream - is readily accessible via a breezeway between the shops.

The Adara's decor is a trendy take on the mountain lodge with faux wood grain, faux fur, and graphic pictures of logs throughout. Our suite was a two-story affair with a cozy loft for the bed which opened to a patio with views of Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Peak.

The boutique style hotel has a swimming pool, a hot tub, valet parking, laundry service, ski lockers, currency exchange, and 24-hour reception. Pet rooms are available upon request. The rooms are convenient and comfy, and the guest service is excellent.

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ways feel like it). The BB somehow manages to be simple, elegant, avant-garde, and easy. I would be as comfortable in Alexander McQueen (RIP) as a nice pair of jeans and a simple pressed shirt. The earth tone decor is sleek with metal and rock accents that suggest the mountain setting without seeming cliché.

with guests (though you'll have to purchase the sparkler to be sabbled).

The sabering happens in the wine cellar, and what a cellar it is. The dramatic entrance is located square in the middle of the dining room. When André leads you down

is \$55 and includes two towels (bring a bathing suit and flip flops). Packages start at \$96 and can be customized with various types of