

Who says you have to ski?


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A porte cochere at Nika Lake Lodge. Anna Beaudry Photographic Design Anna Beaudry Photographic Design

Yoga pants, swimsuit, cocktail dress — check. I'm packed and ready for a weekend in Whistler. What about skis, poles and parkas? Don't need 'em. Skiing just isn't my thing, thanks to my first experience with a boyfriend who seemed to forget I was there and went schussing down the hill, leaving me to fend for myself.

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Skiing just isn't my thing, thanks to my first experience with a boyfriend who seemed to forget I was there and went schussing down the hill, leaving me to fend for myself. It took hours to make it down the hill, mostly on my butt, and I vowed "never again."

But that hasn't stopped me from returning to Whistler. I've learned the resort town has lots to offer non-skiers. We're spoiled for choice.

We checked into Nita Lake Lodge just in time for a session at Loka Yoga, which is in the building. If you can swing it, take a class with Tina James

we swanned upstairs to our well appointed suite, complete with gas fireplace and balcony overlooking the lake. One thing I love about resorts is you don't need the car. Nita Lake Lodge's complimentary shuttle delivers you to the village and will pick you up within minutes (or the trail is a pleasant one-hour stroll).

It was tempting not to leave the building, but Bar Oso, newly opened by the Araxi team, beckoned. Bar Oso lives up to the high standards of Araxi. Go early because the word is already out — by 7 p.m. the place was packed, mostly by locals, ordering Spanish-style small plates. The house-made charcuterie is exceptional, and you must try the lamb albondigas, a recipe handed down to chef Jorge Santos from his grandmother. And the chick pea purée? I need that recipe.

Back to the lodge's Aura Restaurant for dinner. We followed the freshest oysters with venison chops and sour cherry jus and sturgeon with elk chorizo. Chef Dean split our entrees, and both dishes paired with wines by the glass. We chose well.

We planned on snowshoeing around Nita Lake (the lodge offers complimentary snowshoe loans) but opted for more indulgence at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler.

It's so exhilarating to breathe mountain air and view the slopes while wallowing in the outdoor hot tubs. There's so much to do without actually leaving the building. With morning yoga classes, afternoon art crawl and shopping at Mountain Galleries (downstairs from the lobby), who has time to ski?

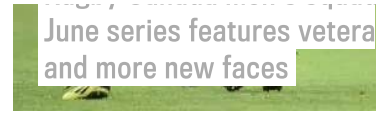
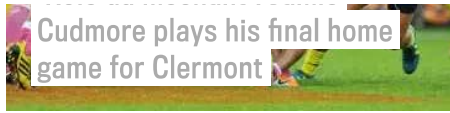
Speaking of art, almost across the street is the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, built with cedar and glass. Definitely worth a visit. The Audain Art Museum is slated to open in early 2016. More than 200 significant art works, from 19th century First Nations masks to modern works by Jeff Wall, will be housed in a 56,000-square-foot tree house.

The yoga pants came in handy on the drive home — we needed the elasticized waist after an epic brunch at the Fairmont. And don't forget to stop at Fix for a loaf of bread. Whistler has it all!

The writer was a guest of Tourism Whistler. No one from Tourism Whistler reviewed or approved this article before publication.

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