

BUCEWEST



TRAVEL

WHISTLER, HOLD THE SKIS

A true year-round resort town, Whistler offers plenty of fun options for non-skiers

BY JANE MUNDY

For those like me who don't care for the thrill of downhill skiing, there's more fun to be had in Whistler than just on the slopes. In fact, we're spoiled for choice.

Whatever your speed, from bobsledding on the world's fastest track to wallowing in an outdoor spa, everyone can enjoy a winter getaway, including youngsters and the family dog.

Activities

For an Olympic rush, hop onto a bobsled at the Whistler Sliding Centre. "When you think it can't go any faster, you go faster and everyone is screaming-laughing," said Mayor Nancy Wilhelm-Morden. "I highly recommend it." Still in need of speed? Superfly Zip Line is the longest tandem line in Canada, meaning you get 80 seconds in the air from platform to platform. The braking system is hands-free, so you don't have to do anything except thrill at flying 600 feet off the ground.

Slower-paced but a blast nonetheless is driving—and riding shotgun—an RZR 4x4 vehicle off-road with The Adventure Group (snowmobiles are swapped by December). They are safe and amazingly easy to drive through deep puddles and up rocky hills to breathtaking scenery. And conveniently located next to the zip line.

Even calmer, local companies offer sleigh rides, snowtubing and snowshoeing. "Lost Lake is a five-minute walk from our pedestrian village and we are surrounded by forest. Whistler isn't just about skiing and snowboarding," says Wilhelm-Morden. Skate for free (or ▶

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Superfly
Zip Line.

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The Adventure Group
snowmobiles.



Dubh Linn Gate.

rent skates for \$5) on the outdoor rink at Olympic Plaza, where you can keep warm outside with gas fireplaces and hot chocolate from a nearby café and the brew pub is a minute's walk away.

Or how about something completely different? Start swinging at Forged Axe Throwing, guaranteed to “Unleash your Inner Lumberjack.” Rather Monty Python-ish, think darts with a bit more muscle power.

Newbies and seasoned yogis alike will enjoy classes with expert instructors at Loka Yoga, particularly with owner Tina James. One perk at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler is yoga classes offered to hotel guests, mornings and afternoons. Walk the road of relaxation at Scandinave Spa, from eucalyptus steam rooms to heated outdoor pools to cold plunge pools. Repeat. The swimming pool at the Pan Pacific Whistler Mountainside is big enough for laps and next to its outdoor hot tub.

The Audain Art Museum's 55,000-square-foot building is a work of art unto itself. More than 200 significant art works include Emily Carr paintings, 19th-century First Nations masks and modern works by Jeff Wall. Bring out the artist in yourself and sign up for a class through Arts Whistler. Photography Whistler offers workshops and walking tours.

Eating and Drinking

You work up an appetite after zipping around the backcountry, swimming and skating. But first, cosy into a seven-layer, duck-down parka at Bearfoot Bistro's ice-cold and blue-hued vodka tasting room, which carries a rotating collection of more than 60 vodkas.

Kids love beaver tails (a big flat pastry) and *haute chien* at Zog's Dogs, a food stall near the base of the gondolas. Who doesn't love pub grub on the patio at Dubh Linn Gate, warmed by its big heat lamps? Splurge on haute cuisine at Araxi, where

chef Quang Dang (formerly at West in Vancouver) never disappoints. Just around the corner is the smaller and more casual Bar Oso featuring house-made charcuterie, small plates and killer gin & tonic cocktails.

Browsing, Shopping and Sightseeing

Get yourself kitted out for snow at homegrown Canadian stores Roots and Arc'teryx that sell more than fleeces and ski socks. Buy edible souvenirs at Rogers' Chocolates, and check out family-owned Armchair Books next to the Whistler Grocery Store.

Hop on the three-kilometre Peak2Peak gondola, which is the longest unsupported gondola line in the world. One of the trams, the silver special, has a glass floor that increases your chances of wildlife spotting. Grab a bevy by the Olympic Rings and do a little people watching. One non-skier

advantage is nabbing the best spot on one of Whistler's mountainside patios near a heat lamp with a great view—before everyone comes down from the mountain.

Bring the Kids and Dogs

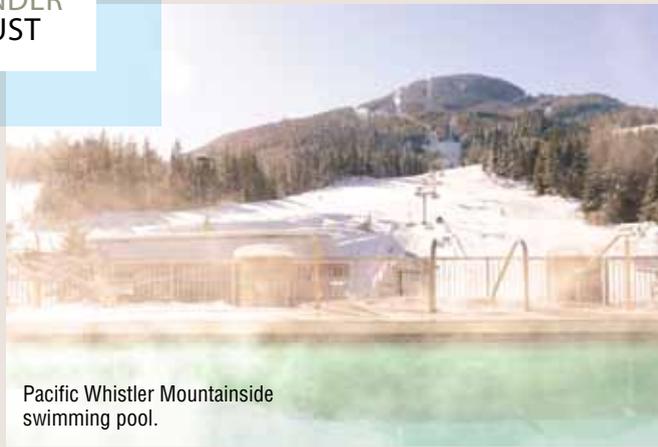
Babysitting Whistler comes to you and takes the kids out and about for fun activities. Evenings the sitter will stay in your room and bring a craft kit. "Our 14 years of service is the first choice for child care from most resorts," says owner Tara Hickey.

Whistler's mantra could be "Have dog, will travel." Alpine Dogs offers in-room sitting and adventure hikes and Whistler Dog Sitting will try to send the same person to your room if you do multiple bookings, "so there is no anxiety with the owner or dog, much the same as looking after a child," says owner Anna Webb. 🐾



Scandinave Spa.

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Pacific Whistler Mountainside swimming pool.

TOP: SCANDINAVE SPA, WHISTLER; PAN PACIFIC WHISTLER MOUNTAINSIDE

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