

Eating like an Olympian in Whistler

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – The International Olympic Committee might not think eating is an Olympic sport, but I tried to make it one while I was in Whistler.

With so many restaurants to choose from, it made me ski even harder. This way I could still fit into my ski pants. It was a good thing for my wallet and waistline we were there for less than a week.



Breakfast with
a view at
Fairmont
Chateau
Whistler.

Photos/Kathryn
Reed

I like breakfast, but I'm usually OK with a piece of fruit. Well, that routine went out the window while staying at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler. I learned I have a potato problem.

I don't usually like buffets – no matter the meal being served. Oh, but this one at the Wildflower let me go back for more of the yummy fingerling breakfast potatoes. I never did figure out the seasoning, but they were spectacular.

I first had them with the frittata I had delivered to the room the first morning. I knew from the get-go I had found a spud that was worth gushing over. Sue had the signature omelet. The problem is the in-room breakfast bill came to a little more than \$90.

The buffet the next morning was \$31 a person. For bigger eaters, they would get their money's worth. So would non-skiers if it meant lingering there all day.

I have to admit, though, we didn't eat lunch either of these days – we were that full.

The buffet had more items than I could ever try in one sitting. An omelet station allows you to pick what you want the chef to mix in, pancakes come with caramelized pecans and bananas, poached eggs are served in ramekins, breakfast meats are plentiful, sauteed mushrooms and cooked tomatoes are unique, cheeses, smoked salmon, cereal and tons of fruit fill the buffet.

Dinner one night was in this same restaurant – the Wildflower. We started things with a 2006 Cabernet from Sumac Ridge, one of many wineries in British Columbia.

"This region is like Napa. BC is a big wine area and it's growing," our waitress Cindy said.

We each had soup – I had the special of the night, broccoli spinach, and Sue had the seafood chowder. Sue loved the big chunks of seafood. She almost licked the bowl. Mine just got better with each spoonful.

When the entrees arrived Sue stopped talking. She was too busy enjoying the cedar roast salmon (\$29). For someone from Vermont, she had to admit the local glazed maple syrup on her salmon was divine.

I had the risotto (\$18) – Pemberton squash, King mushrooms,

chickpea and edamame croquette. It was hearty, tasty and the perfect meal after a day on the mountain.

Also at the Fairmont is the Mallard. A wood fireplace, comfy couches and chairs call out to weary legs to sit for a while. The prices are about as large as the chairs – \$15 for Sue's burger, \$18 for a Portobello burger. They were yummy, but they were Fairmont prices.

On the mountain we stopped at the Roundhouse Lodge. Our usual beer and French fry skier lunch was enhanced with roasted veggie chipotle chili. A nice touch was the hot cocoa being served in a ceramic mug. This is one way Whistler cuts down on waste.

We spent \$26.90 for yam fires, regular fries, a beer, hot cocoa and chili.

Choices run the gamut – made to order sandwiches, Asian dishes, baked potatoes, whole pizzas, wraps, steak sandwiches and plenty more.

One of the publications we read said Merlin's is the place for nachos. The full order (\$19) feeds five adults. We opted for the half order and almost finished it. It came with plenty of napkins. Kokanee beer from BC made them taste even better.

Other restaurants in Whistler Village cater to the casual diner, like Merlin's. Some are definitely upscale. Even in the cool weather lots of people chose to eat outside.

A kiosk not far from the edge of the mountain was doing a robust business of selling fries, hot dogs and cocoa.

At Elements, which is adjacent to the Summit Lodge where we spent a couple nights, tapas are the specialty. Our waiter Rob suggested two tapas per person. We went with stuffed mushrooms, lentils, lettuce tofu wraps and maple root vegetables.

Wow! – is what my notes say next to the lentils. Big pieces of avocado added an interesting texture and coolness to the otherwise tangy flavor of the lentils.

Sue was most boastful about the dessert tapas – sticky toffee pudding.

Most tapas are in the \$10 range.

One of the things many of the restaurants in Whistler brag about is using fresh, local ingredients. Even the coffeehouse Moguls touted locally grown items for some of its unusual edibles. Maybe this is why everything seemed to taste so wonderful in this resort town.

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