A food-centric vacation in Fraser Valley, British Columbia

By Tracy Ellen Beard | Aug 8, 2019



Australian rack of lamb at Morgan's Bistro

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Fraser Valley is Canada's largest agricultural area. Located one hour east of Vancouver, B.C., this region provides resources for the city's renowned farm-to-table dining scene. Discover the unique eateries, quality restaurants and mouth-watering cuisine in three Fraser Valley cities—Harrison Mills, Harrison Hot Springs, and Abbotsford.

Millennials are fleeing Vancouver for the Valley because of escalating prices. New residents are using the Valley's quality local ingredients to open exceptional bakeries, restaurants, and juice bars. My friend, Laura, and I recently road-tripped to explore this new foodie haven.

Comfy Cozy at Rowena's Inn

This stay begins at Rowena's Inn on the River at Sandpiper Resort in Harrison Mills. Dining at the Clubhouse with former owner and current resident Betty Anne Faulkner is a special treat. Betty shared several stories about growing up in the house that is now the Inn. She reveled in the storytelling as she described the extravagant summer dances and her personal escapes on the property.

The cold and rainy evening passed quickly as we dined and listened intently to Betty's stories. My scrumptious beef stroganoff, comprised of tender beef and succulent mushrooms bathed in a rich sour cream sauce tossed with al dente egg noodles, was delicious.



Beef stroganoff at the Clubhouse

The next morning, we relaxed by our fireplace in Fenn's cabin, then walked down to the Clubhouse for breakfast. The eggs Benedict, sautéed marble potatoes, coffee, and orange juice hit the spot. Migas, a scrambled egg dish with fried corn tortillas, is delightful.

Tasty Treats in Fraser Valley – Harrison Mills

We followed one of the many Circle Farm Tours in the area. Find unique treats at Farmhouse Natural Cheeses. A delicious goat brie was the perfect choice to nibble on throughout the day. The Back Porch Coffee Roaster sells a variety of pottery, baskets, and coffees.

Dan and his wife, Lynda, own the Roaster. We watched their daughter roast coffee in a circa 1919 Flame Roaster, then wandered around outside, perusing the numerous antiques, collectibles, and home and garden decorations for sale.



1919 Flame Roaster at Back Porch Coffee Roaster

Delicious Dining at Morgan's Bistro

Driving to Harrison Hot Springs, we arrived at the Harrison Beach Hotel situated directly across from Harrison Lake. After checking in, we explored the village on quadricycles before soaking in the local pool filled with water from the hot springs.

Next to the hotel is the fabulous Morgan's Bistro. Morgan's son-in-law, Stewart, gave us the royal treatment. The meal began with escargot in butter with sun-dried tomatoes and chipotle and an eggplant Napoleon dredged in Japanese panko. Layers of tasty eggplant with a slightly spicy tomato sauce and Grana Padano cheese.



Eggplant Napoleon at Morgan's Bistro

Sharing meals allowed us to taste a multitude of flavors. We dined on a delicious rack of lamb and a slow-roasted bone-in beef short rib. For dessert, we shared a rich chocolate pâté and vanilla crème brûlée with fresh raspberries.

Stewart told us that Morgan owned two huge restaurants: one in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, for 25 years, and another in Whistler, British Columbia. Today she owns Morgan's Bistro and one additional restaurant. Each of her restaurant menus features her recipes.

The next morning began at Muddy Waters Cafe: coffee, a cranberry almond bar, and a fabulous piece of coffee cake. We drove through miles of farmland and stopped in Abbotsford, where we started our downtown food-centric walking tour.

Fabulous Foodie Tour in Abbotsford

Polly Fox is a specialty bakery serving sweet and savory gluten-free baked goods. Kelsey, the owner, is allergic to gluten but loves baked goods. She started the restaurant three years ago, and her friend, Kaitlin, helps run the place. Laura and I shared a double dark chocolate cookie, a cashew bar, and a pizza puff. The recipes at Polly Fox produce light, flaky gluten-free treats. Duft & Co Bakehouse is locally renowned for their toffee sticky bread pudding. It lives up to its reputation.

Kristina and Johannes own Little Brother and Oldhand Coffee. Our lunch at Little Brother began with an Aperol Spritz. The restaurant serves small and large plates meant for sharing. We sampled scrumptious baby potatoes tossed with herbs and garlic, and flavorful seared spring brassicas with garlic aioli and sourdough crumbs.

The decadent mushroom toast, made with cremini, shiitake, and oyster mushrooms tossed in a creamy ragout with fresh herbs, sat atop toasted sourdough. The Le Club combined duck rillette with thick-cut bacon, tomato, quince mostarda, and garlic aioli, all served between slices of fresh-baked fougasse-style bread.

We finished our tour at Oldhand Coffee with freshly fried doughnuts, served only on Fridays at 4:00 p.m.



Mushroom toast at Little Brother

Insightful Info at the Fraser Valley Food Farm Market

Kathleen Robinson at the Valley Food Farm Market knows a lot about the food industry in the area. She and her staff are working to grow the weekly farmers' market, which currently has about forty vendors.

She hopes to inspire residents to purchase more local products. Kathleen says, "We are working to connect all the food creators to celebrate the local food."

With this as the goal, she is working with chefs and farmers to increase the amount of Fraser Valley food used by residents and chefs compared to the amount imported and exported to the area.

Tempting Tastes at Field House Brewing

We completed our eating extravaganza at Field House Brewing. Ashley, the general manager, educated us about the restaurant's owners, beers, sours, and history. The brewery is a hot spot for locals and families to gather. The front yard was filled with people sitting on lawn chairs and lounging near the firepits. Laura and I shared a Margherita pizza and the Faspa board with two local cheeses, duck, salami, pickled beets, Porter bacon jam, spicy mustard, and a sweet-and-spicy shredded carrot chutney. We tasted several beers, sours, and a cider.

Most of everything we consumed in the Valley was made from delicious local ingredients. The wine and beer industry in the area is growing rapidly. Book your next trip to this off-the-beaten-path region and indulge in the incredible cuisine.