

# Whistler, high & low

How to live it up—or score some Olympic-size deals—at the West’s biggest ski resort

BY JESS THOMSON | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANIS NICOLAY



**TWO YEARS AGO**, Whistler’s spotlight was focused on one thing: Olympic gold. These days, the legacy of the Games lives on (recreational skeleton, anyone?), but the resort, just two hours north of Vancouver, B.C., continues to shine with sparkly new restaurants and bars—including an über-chic, ice-cold vodka tasting room. But don’t start worrying that Whistler’s gone all Gstaad. While no ski town of this caliber is cheap, this is Canada, so there’s a refreshingly down-to-earth vibe, with bargains to match. Here’s where to splurge and save. \* >26

\*Prices are in U.S. dollars.



## High

Vodka tasting at  
Belvedere Ice  
Room \$47

## Low

Double Bloody  
Mary at Dusty’s  
Bar & BBQ \$9.50

# Weekend Escape

## High

### Stay

At serene **Four Seasons Whistler**, you'll drop a bundle on room-service breakfast, but you're so close to the slopes, you can roll out of bed and hit the lift in the time it takes most people to park. When you're done, a ski valet meets you with hot chocolate and whisks your boots away to warm them for the next day. *From \$400; [fourseasons.com/whistler](http://fourseasons.com/whistler)*

### Explore

For \$222, score a day of private powder with an Earn Your Turns backcountry tour from **Whistler Alpine Guides** ([whistlerguides.com](http://whistlerguides.com)). To relive the Games, splurge on a two-hour skeleton experience at **Whistler Sliding Centre** (\$147; [whistlerslidingcentre.com](http://whistlerslidingcentre.com)) and take two thrilling head-first solo runs.

### Après

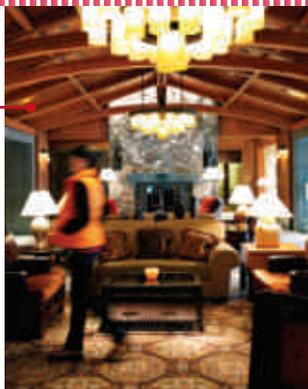
Shrug into a seven-layer duck down parka and sip shots of vodka in the blue-hued **Belvedere Ice Room**, kept at an arctic -13° F. Housed inside the Bearfoot Bistro, Whistler's best spot for oysters and Champagne, the former cigar room holds a rotating collection of more than 60 vodkas. *Tasting \$47/4 vodkas; 4121 Village Green; 604/932-3433.*

### Eat

Alpine Tea at **Fairmont Chateau Whistler** (*about \$25; begins in early 2012; [fairmont.com/whistler](http://fairmont.com/whistler)*) is perhaps the only place in town where you can eat tender scones and Devonshire cream in your ski boots. **Aura** (2131 Lake Placid Rd.; 604/966-5700), the exceptional restaurant at Nita Lake Lodge, uses molecular gastronomy with the right amount of restraint in its dinner menu (*\$208/5 courses for 2, including wine*). Start with the housemade charcuterie.

### Spa

Indulge in the \$242 British Columbia hot clay treatment at the **Four Seasons Whistler's spa**, which starts with a salt rub and ends with a heavenly massage and a cup of Mountain Berry tea. [fourseasons.com/whistler/spa](http://fourseasons.com/whistler/spa)



## Low

### Stay

For ski-in/ski-out convenience without Whistler Village prices, find some buddies and split a comfy two-bedroom condo at **Legends Whistler**, at the base of the Creekside gondola. It's only \$395 a night and offers quick mountain access, plus a full kitchen. *2-night weekend min.; [lodgingovations.com](http://lodgingovations.com)*

### Explore

**Fresh Tracks** ([whistlerblackcomb.com](http://whistlerblackcomb.com)), the get-on-the-mountain-first breakfast ticket program, is just \$18 with a \$95 lift ticket—a heckuva lot cheaper than a helicopter ride. For that, you get a hearty breakfast at the Roundhouse Lodge and first crack at the slopes. Not an alpine skier? Tour 34 miles of cross-country trails at **Whistler Olympic Park** in Callaghan Valley (*\$22; 5 Callaghan Valley Rd.; [whistlerolympicpark.com](http://whistlerolympicpark.com)*), or sign up for a horse-drawn sleigh ride. **Blackcomb Sleighrides** (*\$54; [blackcombsleighrides.com](http://blackcombsleighrides.com)*) is the only outfit that runs on Blackcomb.

### Après

Hit **Dusty's Bar & BBQ**, at the base of the Creekside gondola, where the \$14 pulled-pork sandwich is the real deal and beer comes in a bucket if you order enough. Try the house Caesar (that's Canadian for Bloody Mary)—\$9.50 makes it a double. *2040 London Lane; 604/905-2171.*

### Eat

Pop out of your bindings for snacks and a pot of English Breakfast at the **Harmony Hut Tea House** ([whistlerblackcomb.com](http://whistlerblackcomb.com)), which sits atop the Harmony chairlift. For about \$2, you get a steaming cup and a million-dollar view. For dinner, seek out **Nagomi Sushi** (108-4557 Blackcomb Way; 604/962-0404) in the Upper Village. A meal for two of, say, housemade seafood gyoza, crisp prawn tempura, and sushi rolls, plus strawberry sake margaritas, will set you back about \$70.

### Spa

Walk through the woods down a snowy path to **Scandinave Spa**, a Nordic oasis just outside town. For \$57, you can do as many circuits as you like of the Finnish sauna, eucalyptus steam room, hot baths, and cold plunges. [scandinave.com](http://scandinave.com)