

Gerry: What I did on my summer vacation

Gerry is writing today...

What was your best meal? Well, now that is a loaded question! Do you want to know where was the most delicious meal, the best company, the best view, the most expensive or the overall best experience?

Having just returned from a 26-day driving tour— Georgetown to Vancouver Island and back, it has been a frequently asked question. Because I can't name just one, I've decided to categorize them to tell you of the best meals with a view. You see, a dining experience is more than just the food on your plate— it is the ambiance, the service, the table setting, the presentation and the taste of the food, the location, the creativity of the menu and the company. All our senses are involved, as we eat first with our eyes, then our noses, then our mouths.

The first notable meal with a view was a lunch on the balcony of the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. As we overlooked the hotel pool and lush vegetation, beyond that was the pristine lake and the breathtaking mountains. Lunch was artfully created and tastefully enjoyed, as we shared a tapas tasting platter with grilled shrimps, scallops, tapenade on crostini and short ribs with caramelized onion. We followed this up with the chilled yellow pepper and tomato soup with a glass of white wine sangria. Fabulous.

Next meal with a view was at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise at a window overlooking majestic Lake Louise and its glacier. Dinner was a seven-course chef's tasting menu which was also fabulous. The highlight was the chilled beet soup with crème fraiche.

In the Okanogan valley, we enjoyed another great meal with a view in Penticton, at the Hooded Merganser (which is Dutch), overlooking

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Lake Okanogan at sunset. Funky atmosphere and décor, creative menu and again, a super view of the lake.

Number four on the list would be a picnic in Peachland, British Columbia sitting by the Okanogan Lake with fresh produce from the morning market in Vernon, B.C. Peaches, tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes and more topped off by a quick dip in the warm lake and a conversation with a couple previously from Brampton. Small world indeed! A phrase often said on our trip, as we met people from all over the world, as well as close to home.

The fifth would be the Cannery in Vancouver with a picturesque view overlooking the harbour with its tug boats moving ships around as the evening sunset coloured the sky pink for us. Creative large menu, delicious food. The most memorable was the homemade lobster oil for dipping and the hit of the night was the salmon Wellington.

What a wonderful journey that every Canadian should take to see their country. As I entered the back door of our home on day 26, I clicked my heels and proclaimed "there's no place like home".

Have fun and keep cooking!

(Lori and Gerry can be reached at whatscookin@independentfreepress.com)

Shrimp and Pork Wonton Soup

Serves six

Wonton ingredients

- 1/2 lb ground pork
- 1/2 cup chopped water chestnuts
- 1/2 cup chopped raw shrimp
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup chopped shitake mushrooms
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp rice vinegar
- 1/2 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 30 sheets wonton wrappers (approximately)



Wonton method

1. Mix together all ingredients (except wonton wrappers) until thoroughly mixed.
2. Lay out a wonton wrapper. Wet the four edges with your finger dipped in cold water. Place a teaspoon full of filling into the centre of the wrapper. Bring up all four edges to make a purse. Pinch the edges well to make sure they are sealed.
3. Set finished wontons on a parchment-lined cookie sheet and cover with a damp cloth until ready to cook.

Soup ingredients

- 6 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- thin slice fresh ginger
- 3 baby bok choy, sliced
- pepper to taste

Soup method

1. In a large saucepan, bring chicken broth, water and ginger to a boil, reduce heat until broth is simmering.
2. Use a slotted spoon to add the wontons a few at a time, keeping the broth at a low boil. Cook the wontons approximately 7-10 minutes or until no longer pink inside (cut one open and look). Remove the cooked wontons and set aside. Continue this procedure until all wontons have been cooked.
3. Add all cooked wontons back into the pot as well as the sliced bok choy. Taste for pepper. Turn heat off and serve immediately.

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