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Magazine for
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**Pacific Coastal Airlines
touches down in Nanaimo**



Forage and feast

Find food in the wild

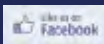
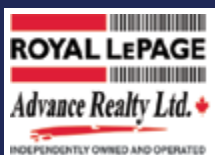
All aboard

Indigenous bear-viewing
and whale-watching
experiences in BC

The Harbour City

Stay and play in
Nanaimo—PCA's newest
destination

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Rare Campbell River Property: Half acre in town, 4560sqft home on three levels and a large, two-story workshop/garage. Lower back yard with walkout access from the home, and undeveloped natural space behind. Built by a local developer in the 80s for his personal property, the home and shop are constructed to the highest standards of the time.

\$974,900



Campbell River Development Property: 0.77 acre cleared lot zoned multi-residential in a mixed-residential neighbourhood. Quick access to main transportation routes into town. Close to schools, rec centre, college, shopping and park trails. Surrounded by stunning natural beauty, **Campbell River** is a growing, active city with a need for all types of housing.

\$950,000



DL1489 Jackson Bay: 33.7 acre oceanfront property in **Topaze Harbour** in **Johnstone Strait**. Beautiful views and sunny exposure in this appealing coastal location with easy access to miles of Crown land to explore. Multiple dwellings, a workshop and outbuildings, moorage and substantial infrastructure in place. Zoned residential and commercial.

\$1,500,000



Sonora Island Oceanfront: 6.43 highbank oceanfront acres in **Owen Bay** with a 1036sqft modern-style cabin. Amazing ocean views, loft space, running water and a flushing toilet! Licensed protected moorage, domestic water source. Additional 9x11 sleeping cabin and outbuildings. This is a turn-key property in the popular **Discovery Islands** region.

\$449,000



Nimpo Lake Log Home: Attractive 4560sqft log home with amazing views on 1.47 acres. Beautiful finishing, gourmet kitchen and large lakeside deck. In addition there is a second lakefront residence, a large workshop, a dock and a floatplane ramp. **Nimpo Lake** serves as a major jump-off point for many wilderness activities in the **Chilcotin** region.

\$1,698,000



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Associate Group Publisher Janet Gairdner, janet.gairdner@blackpress.ca - 250.480.3251

Managing Editor Susan Lundy, susan.lundy@blvdmag.ca

Creative Director Lily Chan | **Graphic Design** Janice Marshall

Advertising Ramiro Prado, ramiro.prado@blackpress.ca - 250.480.3246

Natasha Griffiths, natasha.griffiths@northislandgazette.com - 250.902.8040

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FLYING INTO THE FUTURE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I want to take a moment to express my appreciation for choosing Pacific Coastal Airlines as part of your summer plans, and I am delighted to share some exciting developments and important updates that have taken place within our airline in the past months.

July marked another exciting stride in our journey as we unveiled a new chapter in our service offerings—a new seasonal route between Victoria and Kamloops. This non-stop, one-hour flight will be your best travel option for this fall-winter plan, especially during the holidays. Scheduled to commence operations from October 1, 2023 to April 26, 2024, this route will facilitate six weekly non-stop flights between the bustling Victoria International Airport (YYJ) and the beautiful Kamloops Airport (YKA). The new route will be operated with the comfortable Beechcraft 1900 aircraft, providing passengers with a pleasant and efficient travel experience. Tickets for this new route are available for purchase, and we can't wait to have you on board!

Moreover, I am thrilled to announce the successful inauguration of our Nanaimo-Vancouver and Nanaimo-Kelowna routes. Proudly standing as the first airline to offer direct flights for the Nanaimo-Kelowna route, we have created an opportunity for passengers to travel between these two remarkable destinations in just over an hour. Your convenience and satisfaction remain at the forefront of our service, and we are pleased to have these routes now operational.

With that said, we recognized that August was an extremely challenging month for the communities across the Northwest Territories and the Okanagan. The recent wildfires in BC have deeply affected these regions, impacting the lives of many. In line with our commitment to supporting communities in need, we have initiated sponsored fight-fire relief cargo flights in collaboration with the

Mamas for Mamas organization, a specialized poverty relief agency, and an all-inclusive community for mothers and caregivers. These flights are aimed at supplying the Okanagan community with essential support and donations from the communities across BC. As we stand united with the communities and families in the Okanagan, we extend our gratitude to the firefighters who have been working tirelessly to ensure the safety of the community and their homes. We also want to acknowledge the Kelowna International Airport (YLW) authorities for their dedication in maintaining safe travel during these trying times.

As our airline continues to spread its wings across British Columbia, I am excited to announce that we are currently seeking new pilots and aircraft maintenance engineers (AMEs) to join the PCA family. Here, our vision extends beyond providing employment—we offer a comprehensive pathway for your career journey. We take pride in providing in-house professional training and coaching with senior chief pilots leading the way. Beyond a job, we extend travel perks, uphold work-life balance and foster avenues for professional advancement. If you or someone you know is interested in being our pilot, AME or any other position within our organization, please visit our careers site at: pacificcoastal.com/careers.

As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our dedication to delivering exceptional service, supporting our community and nurturing our team members' growth. Your trust in us drives us to be the best we can be, and we are honoured to be a part of your journey.

Thank you for your continued support and loyalty. We look forward to serving you on your next flight. ✈️

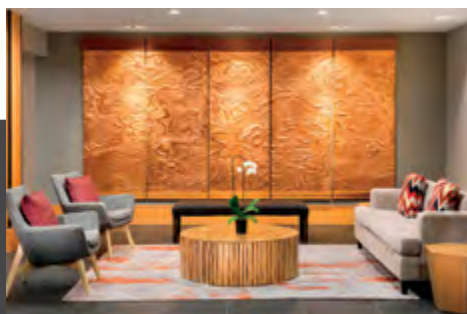
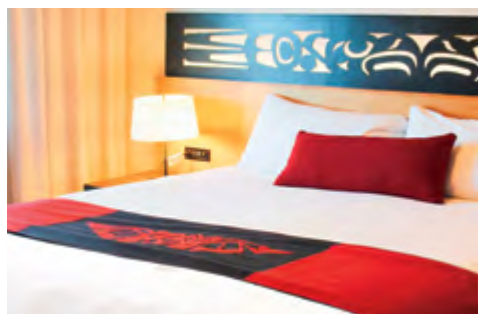
Warm regards,

Quentin Smith



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Un-Ordinary Your Day

Łamataxʷ, Campbell River, is nestled within the territory of the Liŋ̓w̓il̓daʷ peoples; the WeWaiKai, WeiWaiKum, and Kwikwaka'wakw Nations; here there are no borders between city and nature. Łamataxʷ, Campbell River is located in the heart of the Discovery Passage, a small city nestled in nature, surrounded by the wild, with all the comforts of home.

Find your perfect itinerary and get inspired to plan your stay, from where to grab your morning coffee to the best places to embrace the outdoors and experience our community culture.

7AM



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10AM



Embrace the outdoors

7PM



**Share your stories
of the wild**

3PM



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A deep-sea octopus. Photo courtesy Dr. Cherisse Du Preez, Ocean Exploration Trust, Northeast Pacific Seamount Expedition Partners

Deep-sea octopus garden nursery discovered

By Alexandra Mehl, Local Journalism Initiative, courtesy westcoasttraveller.ca

Offshore of Vancouver Island, in Nuu-chah-nulth waters north of the Pacific Coastal Airlines destination of Tofino, and some 65 kilometres west of Hesquiat Harbour, lives a nursery of deep-sea octopuses.

It's one of just four known octopus nurseries in the world, says DFO researcher Cherisse Du Preez.

In late May, Du Preez and colleague Heidi Gartner set out to sea on a deep-sea expedition, in partnership with the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Council of the Haida Nations, Quatsino and Pacheedaht First Nations, Ocean

Networks Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The expedition was largely to explore the pending Marine Protected Area Tang.cwan-ḥačxʷiqak-Tsigis, alongside additional places of protection interest, Du Preez says.

Months prior, the German scientific research organization GEOMAR and Natural Resources Canada discovered bubbles travelling 1.5 kilometres through the water column, indicating a methane seep from the seafloor, Du Preez says. This was the reason they went to the site.

On their last dive of the expedition, along Hesquiat slope, they came across a deep-sea octopus brooding on her

eggs within cave-like features in carbonate rock created by the cold seeps.

According to a 2014 study, this particular deep-sea octopus, *Granelledone boreopacifica*, is known to have the longest-known egg brooding period of any animal due to the cold temperatures of the deep-sea waters. The embryonic development period slows down, compared to shallow-water octopuses, which brood their eggs from one to three months.

"It's a beautiful deep-sea octopus, very charismatic, purple, big black eyes," says Du Preez. "They sit on their eggs, don't move, don't eat and just

MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE: MITCHELL



Position: Ramp Supervisor

Location: YVR

Time with PASCO: 2 years

Job description: *My job consists of ensuring all ramp personnel are properly assigned and utilized in the most productive and efficient ways possible. This includes organizing the parking of aircraft throughout the daily operation and ensuring passengers' bags and cargo are treated safely and with care. Other duties include servicing of aircraft, loading and unloading baggage and cargo and towing aircraft—just to name a few.*

Where were you born and where did you grow up? I was born in Vancouver, BC. I grew up in a small fishing town called Steveston in Richmond.

Who is your family? My family is my mother Chris, my father Darcy, my older sister Maddie, and our cat named Beau and fur puppy named Rowzie.

What path did you take to get to this job? Previously I worked at Sear Seaplanes. There, I was introduced to the operations of an airline and through that came the opportunity to join the team at Pacific Coastal Airlines.

What do you like best about this work? The people and culture—I have made friends that will last a lifetime. The dynamic working environment here is something I also like: no two days are alike.

What are your hobbies outside of the job? My hobbies include skiing, fishing, flying, taking my dog for hikes and playing hockey.

defend the eggs for a minimum of four and a half years."

Brooding these eggs will be the last thing that these octopuses do, Du Preez adds.

Cold seeps are recognized by the Canadian government to be among ecologically and biologically significant areas.

"They are so standalone outstanding, with the biodiversity you find around them, that they warrant protection," Du Preez says.

The nursery ground that Du Preez and her team discovered is currently located in an area that is fishable.

"The most concerning thing about finding a nursery somewhere where fishing can happen is that it can be that easy to take out a single generation of an octopus," she says, reflecting on bottom contact fishing.

The crew counted 25 easily spotted

octopuses, although Du Preez says she has "no doubt that there were hundreds more than what we saw."

Deep-sea octopuses represent the top of the food chain, making them significant to the distribution of energy in the deep sea, Du Preez says: "When the top predators aren't healthy, they actually have an effect back on the ecosystem."

Du Preez explains that octopuses living along Hesquiat slope will have an impact on global ocean ecosystems.

"If you didn't have that nursery ground... you almost couldn't imagine the ripple effect, if that wasn't a safe place for the octopus," Du Preez says. "You might not have that type of octopus anywhere along the North American continental slope—all five coasts—because they all come from that one nursery ground."

New hotel approved for Victoria International Airport

Victoria Airport Authority (VAA) has approved a proposal by the Kothari Group to construct a 129-room Marriott TownePlace Suites Hotel on 3.5 acres of commercial-zoned land at the Victoria International Airport (YYJ).

It will be located at the corner of Highway 17 and Beacon Avenue West.

The extended-stay, three-storey, all-suite hotel will feature a combination of studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units with fully equipped kitchens, a fitness centre, swimming pool and 1,500 square feet of meeting space. The development will also include a full-service restaurant, with the brand expected to be announced soon.

Activity will begin onsite this fall to prepare for the start of construction, which is expected to be completed by late spring of 2025.

"We are pleased to see this project coming to Victoria International Airport and the Greater Victoria area," said Geoff Dickson, VAA president and CEO. "The addition of the TownePlace Suites Hotel at YYJ will provide

travellers and visitors to the region with convenient access not only to the airport and Sidney, but also to the many amenities and services in the area and the Pat Bay highway into Victoria."

"We are both honoured and delighted to embark on this exciting venture at Victoria International Airport," said Anupam Kothari, president of the Kothari Group, which works with international brands such as Marriott, Hilton and Hyatt to develop and manage hotels across Canada. "This endeavour aligns perfectly with the Kothari Group's values of excellence, commitment and collaboration. Our goal is to not only offer a place of comfort and luxury but also to reflect the rich culture of the region."

In collaboration with the **W̱SÁNEĆ** Nation, Kothari Group will be incorporating art installations and place-naming opportunities in the hotel, reflecting the rich culture and heritage of the **W̱SÁNEĆ** People.

More information at:

victoriaairport.com/partnering-with-us/kothari-group-hotel-proposal



The Victoria Airport Authority has approved construction of a new long-term stay hotel on its property, to be built starting this fall by the Kothari Group. Courtesy Victoria Airport Authority.

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Stay and play in The Harbour City

The distinct charm of Nanaimo, PCA's latest destination

By Lauren Kramer

Photos by Tyler Cave, courtesy Tourism Nanaimo.

There are a few cities on Vancouver Island that get a lot of attention—but Nanaimo is not one of them. However, this may all change now that Pacific Coastal Airlines has added The Harbour City to its collection of BC destinations, and as more people learn of the distinctive charms of this seaside town.

Among these charms is the Old Quarter, a three-block stretch of historic buildings full of interesting retailers selling locally made jewellery, cool kitchenware, new and consigned apparel and island-made crafts. Nestled in between them are coffee shops that spill out on the sidewalk, mom-and-pop restaurants and aromatic bakeries offering a heady assortment of Nanaimo bars to tempt the sweet-toothed.

We arrived for a 24-hour visit, venturing immediately to Maffeo Sutton Park to catch the ferry to Satsutshun, also known as Newcastle Island Marine Provincial Park. After a seven-minute ferry ride, passengers disembarked on an idyllic little island filled with quiet beaches, picturesque coves, forested trails and scenic overlooks.



There's everything and nothing to do here. You could gaze out at the ocean for hours or hike the nine-kilometre perimeter of the island, rent a kayak and paddle between the pleasure craft or race a bike through the trails.

We rented a couple of cruising bikes from Jeff's Bike Shack, the only bike and kayak outfitter on Saysutshun, and hit the trails, navigating carefully over the gnarly tree roots that crisscross the path. We passed beaches filled with low-tide treasures, stopping to walk gingerly over the sandstone rocks to explore the tide pools. In the distance, BC Ferries moved soundlessly back and forth across the channel. It was a blue-sky day, with vistas of distant islands and steep cliffs that plunge into the ocean.

Later, we ordered fries from the island concession, located in the historic pavilion. The old pavilion is all that remains of Canadian Pacific Railway's brief foray into island ownership in 1930. That year they bought

We spent a leisurely afternoon poking into the stores that line Commercial Street in the Old Quarter, and walking the Harbourfront Walkway, a beautifully landscaped trail that traverses the Newcastle Channel and the downtown waterfront.

Saysutshun as an excursion destination, built the pavilion, restaurant and sports grounds, and encouraged visitors to come from Vancouver. Guests played on the island by day and spent the nights in ships that were moored off the island. The partying ended in 1941, when the resort closed, and today's visitors come for the quiet beaches, the trails, the kayaking and the peace. Most stay for a few hours, though overnight camping is allowed on Saysutshun.

Back on the "big island" at Nanaimo Museum, we learned of the island's deeper history in coal mining. Nanaimo's coal deposits, some of which were beneath Saysutshun, were the first known large deposits on the coast, and the high volatile

bituminous coal was ideal for steam production. The mining industry dominated life in Nanaimo for 100 years, with labourers mining seams located 500 metres below sea level. Over the course of a century, some 50 million tons of coal were removed from Nanaimo and shipped to Vancouver, Victoria, San Francisco, Chile, Hawaii and Alaska.

That coal came at a high price. A binder in the museum contains the names of all 568 workers who lost their lives in mining-related accidents between 1887 and 1952. The May 1887 methane gas explosion claimed 153 of those lives and remains the largest mine disaster in British Columbia, and one of the largest in Canada.

We spent a leisurely afternoon





poking into the stores that line Commercial Street in the Old Quarter, and walking the Harbourfront Walkway, a beautifully landscaped trail that traverses the Newcastle Channel and the downtown waterfront. We peer over the walkway to count the bright purple and orange starfish in the water below, watch as fishermen throw crab pots off the fishing pier and gaze out at the kayakers crossing the channel to circle Saysutshun and Protection islands.

As dusk falls, we head to White Sails Brewing, a local craft brewery, for a taste of its Bastion Blonde Ale, which earned first place at the 2019 BC Beer Awards. We snack on cauliflower bites and cheesy flatbread before making our way to one of the many confectioneries selling Nanaimo bars, the city's famed sweet treats.

It's a sugar-fuelled end to a beautiful mini-vacation in a city that hasn't quite lost its tourism virginity. For visitors, that means reservations-free meals, small-town charm and plenty of fun activities—without competing with the crowds.

If You Go:

Stay:

The Coast Bastion Hotel is a comfortable hotel located across from the iconic Bastion in Nanaimo, and a block from the Old Quarter.

Play:

No need for reservations on the ferry that runs between Nanaimo and Saysutshun, but give yourself plenty of time to enjoy the island's riches. Rent a bike for faster exploration of the island, or a kayak to see its beaches and coves from the water. Visit at low tide and you can

walk from Saysutshun to Protection Island. Info: newcastleisland.ca

The Nanaimo Museum is well worth a visit, particularly for its coal mining display. It's open Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm and admission is by donation.

Info: nanaimomuseum.ca

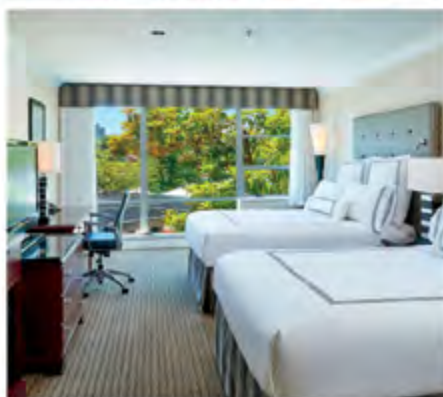
Eat:

White Sails Brewing is a local favourite for beer flights and accompanying munchies.

Info: whitesailsbrewing.com 

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Fun in the sun



Sun Peaks is a low-key playground promising lots to do all year round

By Susan Lundy

Photos courtesy Tourism Sun Peaks

I am balanced slightly precariously on a thick paddleboard floating around the edges of remote McGillivray Lake. One of my daughters drifts by, exuding the confidence of someone who could do a headstand on her paddleboard without creating even a ripple on the lake's glassy surface.

"Thinking about the story you're going to write?" she asks.

"Yup."

"Wouldn't it be a better story if you fell off the paddleboard into the lake?"

Well, yes! But that doesn't mean I plan on toppling over anytime soon. In fact, paddleboarding is much easier than I

expected and this lake, accessed via a long winding dirt road from nearby Sun Peaks, is blissfully quiet and pristine. I am happy to just float about, story or no story. The air is sultry and the sun heavy, and a delicious languidness has settled over the three of us like a soothing summer blanket.

My adult daughters and I landed at Sun Peaks in mid-August, eager to explore this sweet, year-round playground, located less than an hour's drive from the Pacific Coastal Airlines destination at Kamloops, and touted as a "stress-free" little town.

A tiny municipality of 1,400 permanent residents, Sun Peaks is a summertime magnet for mountain

In summer, Sun Peaks serves up a wide range of activities, including golf at an 18-hole, par-72 Graham Cooke-designed course, hiking trails, year-round events and lift access for downhill and cross-country mountain biking. Bikers lined up at the base of the lifts move at a steady pace—"If you have to wait three minutes, you're wondering, 'what the heck!'" we're told at one point.

bikers, hikers and anyone looking for a low-key getaway. It must turn into a veritable Dr. Seuss Whoville in winter, when its cute resort-town architecture and European-style ski-in/ski-out pedestrian village transforms into a snowcapped wonderland, attracting some 250,000 visitors. The pace here is slower than other resort towns like Whistler (permanent residents 14,000, and three million annual visitors) but it still offers 17 square kilometres of skiable terrain (second largest in Canada), 19 feet of snow and 2,000 hours of sun.

In the summer, Sun Peaks serves up a wide range of activities, including golf at an 18-hole, par-72 Graham Cooke-designed course, hiking trails, year-round events and lift access for downhill and cross-country mountain biking. Bikers lined up at the base of the lifts move at a steady pace—"If you have to wait three minutes, you're wondering, 'What the heck!'" we're told at one point.

Sun Peaks has been recognized for its environmental policies and practices and was the first resort in North America and the only resort in Canada to earn the ISO 14001 designation for environmental management. It also has the feel of a place on the verge of a mini boom, with lots of activity and new construction underway.



A testament to its name, the peaks above us and township around us are bathed in sunshine as we park the car and explore the area on foot from our home base at Village Walk 19, a massive three-level, three-bedroom condominium that can sleep a gazillion people within its lavish walls. In addition to meandering around the stores and restaurants in the cute Sun Peaks village, we

take an easy stroll along the paved, multi-use Valley Trail that winds its way around the area.

The next day, our plans include heading up the mountain with a guide from Sports School for the Top of the Mountain Hiking Tour to wander through the carpets of alpine flowers that dot the slopes.

"Just a leisurely walk," I've as-





sured my older daughter, who runs and plays sports but is not a fan of hiking. “Basically, ha ha, we’ll just be ‘tiptoeing through the tulips.’” (Not tulips, of course. But we do enjoy the glorious hues of late-alpine-flower blooms, like ruby-red louseworts, vivid purple fireweed and tiger lilies, and pink and white mountain heather.)

But our “stress-free” getaway takes a bit of a hit as we ride the Sunburst chairlift, soaring to our “leisurely walk” destination, and our guide announces that we’ll jump off the lift one stop short of the top and hike the rest of the way up. To be honest, it almost hurts my neck, stretching it far enough backwards to see the “top,” which will be accessed via a very steep incline. I avert my eyes from my not-a-hiking-fan daughter, but I can feel the glare.

However, it turns out to be a glorious experience—we take it nice and easy—and our guide is so interesting and so informative, I quickly forget that I’m the only one huffing and puffing. (Sun Peaks people seem very fit.) The flowers—

although slightly past their prime in mid-August—are beautiful and the views from the top are spectacular. We take a moment to gape at the mountainous landscape, rolling into the horizon before us.

After a bite to eat—more on food in a minute—we’re off to the activities desk in the Village Day Lodge to collect everything we need for our trip to McGillivray Lake, except the paddleboards, which await us lakeside. The road is a bit rough but the destination is worth the bumps, and after floating about for a couple of hours, we head back to the village relaxed and refreshed—our grueling mountain hike now a distant memory to our soothed muscles.

Our meals here have been a bit of a revelation: for such a small town the restaurants pack a definite punch. Our favourite meal takes place on a patio beneath a pink sky at Mantles Restaurant, where even selective eaters like us (gluten-, dairy- and meat-free) find ample items to choose from. The divine food and perfect setting are almost even surpassed by the impeccable

service, and this restaurant is on our to-do-again list.

Although Bolacco Café was recommended as a local’s favourite for coffee—we discover it is so much more. Step into this cosy café and meet a chalkboard menu filled with enough delectable offerings to make your head spin. There is seating indoors or out, or take a bowl to go, like we did, pulling over a few minutes later at a glorious lakeside stop just a little way down the road towards the highway.

We also attend the very-popular taco night at Bottoms Bar & Grill, dining al fresco in the warm evening air, and, although we don’t have time for either, both Mountain High Pizza and Capones Kitchen come highly recommended.

Signature massages at Sun Peaks Spa cap our final morning, and we head back down the scenic road towards the highway home, satiated, relaxed and refreshed.

And I know my story will be a good one, despite the fact I didn’t fall off the paddleboard. 🏄‍♀️



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Forage and feast

A photograph of a person with long hair, wearing a dark beanie and a dark jacket, reaching up to touch a large, vertical cluster of bright orange, cup-shaped mushrooms growing on a tree trunk. The tree bark is rough and textured. The background shows a dense forest with green foliage and sunlight filtering through the trees.

By Lauren Kramer

**Find food
in the wild
with
Robin Kort**

By Lauren Kramer

We've all picked ripe blackberries off a thorny blackberry bush in the fall, savouring the sweetness of an unexpected treat. In a word, that's foraging—the act of gathering edible fruit, plants and more from the wild, whether that “wild” is in an overgrown backyard in suburbia or an isolated rainforest.

The First Nations in British Columbia were foraging experts who lived off the land for thousands of years, keeping themselves alive year-round from the bounty of the forests, fields and oceans. That bounty is still out there, but most of us ignore it, regarding the “wild” as a tangle of potentially toxic plants we'd never dare bring to our lips.

Fungi get the worst of it when it comes to fear-mongering.

“People are really afraid of mushrooms,” notes chef Robin Kort, owner of Swallow Tail Culinary Adventures, who leads foraging tours in the forests and along the shores of the Lower Mainland, teaching participants how to forage safely.

“We have chanterelles, morels and other mushrooms that are super expensive in our stores but are readily available in the wild and cannot be confused with poisonous mushrooms. And hedgehog mushrooms are even safer because nothing that is poisonous looks anything like them. But ‘fungal phobia’ is a real thing, especially for Canadians with British ancestors. Those with Russian and Eastern European backgrounds tend more often to be ‘fungiphiles.’”

Swallow Tail Culinary Adventures includes several foraging tour opportunities in the Lower Mainland and Whistler, including a two-hour sea foraging experience and a two-hour wild mushrooms education field trip. Or you can choose a 3.5-hour wild mushroom trip in Whistler, or a two-hour wild mushroom exploration in Maple Ridge.

The highly popular sea-foraging event often sells out, so it's best to book early (swallowtail.ca). The course shows how to forage for seaweed,

There's something exciting about finding food without shopping the grocery store aisles. With some reading and research, you can safely explore the possibility of picking local, wild, organic food that's abundant and free of charge.

crab, fish, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, clams, scallops, oysters, geoduck and mussels. Kort offers harvesting tips, and participants taste roasted pop-weed and bull kelp that she grinds into a Japanese spice mix, as well as a foraged dashi chowder, served at the seashore.

Mushroom foraging trips happen September through November and focus on how to find porcini, chanterelle, honey mushrooms, wild oysters

mushrooms and more. These trips also book up fast.

Kort is also the author of *The Coastal Forager's Cookbook: Feasting Wild in the Pacific Northwest*, and has a lot to say about the potential of foraging food.

“A lot of the things we've labeled as weeds are just super successful plants,” Kort notes.

In the spring, the leaves and flowers of the dandelions we





regard as pesky weeds make a great addition to salads or can be made into a marmalade.

The newly grown leaves of stinging nettles—picked carefully with gloves on hands to avoid getting stung—can be sautéed, cooked in soups or made into a pesto. And the new shoots of fiddlehead ferns can be steamed, braised, sautéed, roasted or pickled. The clover that grows prolifically in our lawns can be harvested too, and tastes just like pea shoots.

It's always advisable to do some research before you start foraging, Kort says.

Join a foraging tour in your area to learn about species that can be safely harvested. Don't forage in areas where plants may have been exposed to pesticides or toxic fumes. Be careful of getting lost if you're foraging in the woods. And if you're certain an item is safe, forage sustainably, which means taking no more than one third of any plant that is available and avoiding endangered or threatened species.

There's something exciting about finding food without shopping the grocery store aisles. With some reading and research, you can safely explore the possibility of picking local,


wild, organic food that's abundant and free of charge.

Robin Kort's top three fall-foraged ingredients

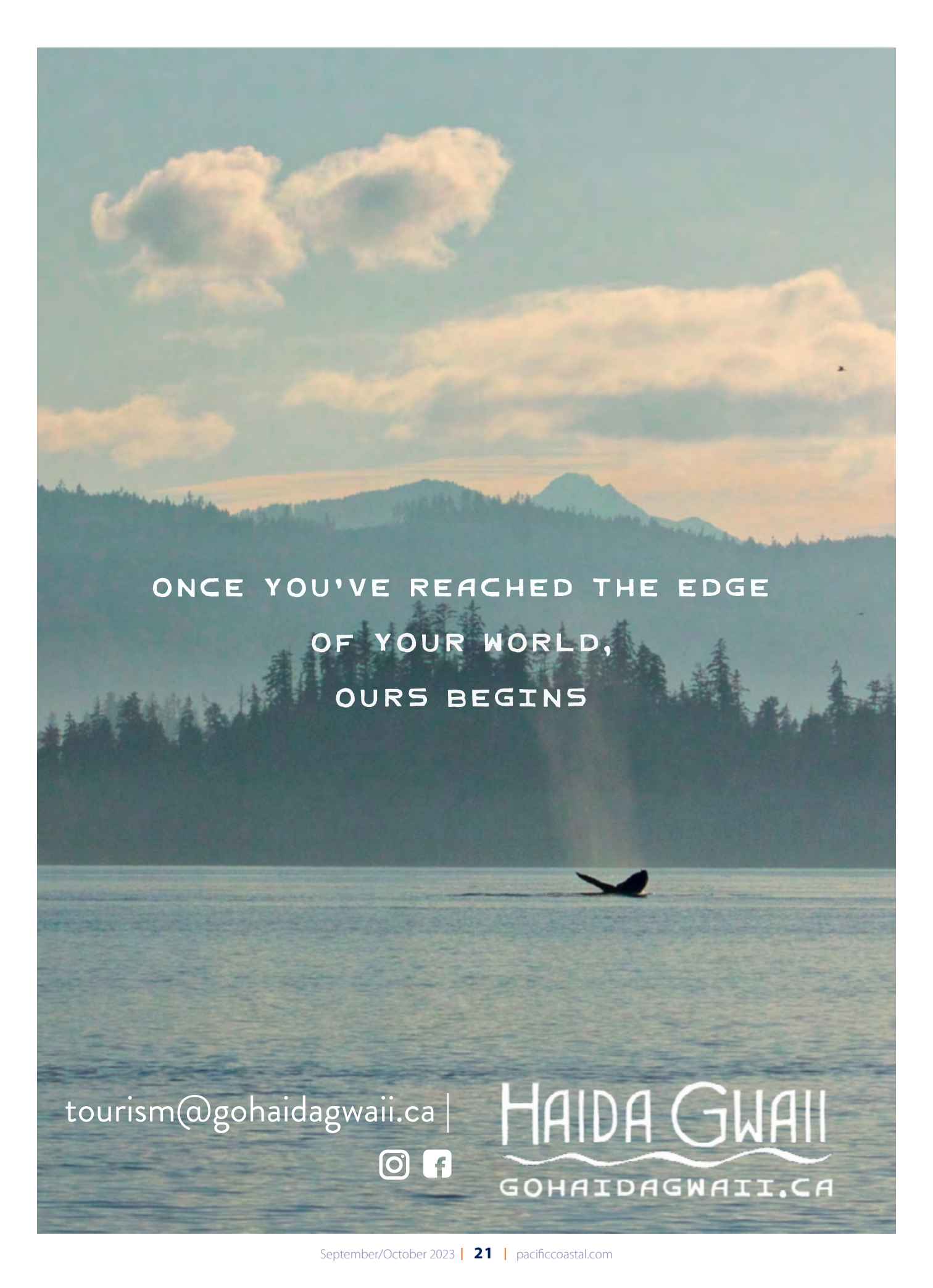
- Wild fall mushrooms, like hedgehog mushrooms, are easy to identify. Look for them in the forest duff beneath conifers like fir and hemlock trees.

These cream-coloured mushrooms with soft tooth-like projections on the underside of their caps are distinctive. Pacific golden chanterelle mushrooms are found under Douglas fir trees in the forest duff. These pumpkin-orange-coloured mushrooms have forking gill-like structures on the underside of their caps, with stems that are solid and white inside. Their aroma tends to be fruity, like apricots.

- Evergreen tips are found in conifer forests around Vancouver. Gather needles from evergreens like spruce and fir to make tea or grind into spice mixes.

- Dungeness crab are fattest in the winter when they've finished molting. Fish for them off the beach or a dock, using a throw trap and turkey neck for bait. 





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All aboard Indigenous tours

Story and photos courtesy of Destination BC and Indigenous Tourism BC

Indigenous bear-viewing and whale-watching experiences in Pacific Coastal Airlines destinations and across BC

For millennia, Indigenous peoples have stewarded the lands of British Columbia. The knowledge and experiences of local nations provide a fresh perspective of how all things are connected, and encourage a deeper relationship with the places, animals and landscapes around us.

Travellers can create their own connections with local wildlife using the following guide to Indigenous-owned companies offering bear-viewing and whale-watching tours in many of Pacific Coastal Airlines (PCA)'s destinations.

Bear-viewing tours:

- **Homalco Wildlife & Cultural Tours** offers grizzly-viewing opportunities in Bute Inlet, the traditional territory of the Homalco First Nation. The Great Bears of Bute experience is a full-day tour starting in PCA's destination of Campbell River, and journeys up the Salish Sea. During the trip, an Indigenous guide provides insights about the lands of the First Peoples. After disembarking the boat, guests are led to a series of raised grizzly-viewing platforms where they can watch the magnificent mammals hunt for salmon near the shore. After a picnic lunch served against a backdrop of mountain and estuary panoramas, guests journey back to Campbell River. The tour is offered between August and November.

• **Klahoose Wilderness Resort**, situated in the coastal wilderness of Desolation Sound (depart from Lund near PCA's destination at Powell River), offers an all-inclusive eco-experience that includes spring bear viewing in May and June, and late summer and fall grizzly bear and salmon run tours, from August to October. In the spring, guests board a boat that drifts past black bears and grizzlies feeding on sedges and

grasses near the estuaries or noshing on mussels, oysters and crabs along the beaches. In the fall, guests travel past spectacular waterfalls in Toba Inlet to viewing platforms tucked into the rainforest alongside a remote river. Here, Indigenous guides facilitate close viewing proximity while respecting the bears' natural habitat. All packages include tours, meals, transfers and overnight accommodation at the resort.

• **Spirit Bear Lodge** in the Great Bear Rainforest, accessed via PCA's Bella Bella destination, offers exclusive access to wildlife viewing areas and cultural sites in the traditional territory of the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation. The all-inclusive experience includes excursions to see black bears and grizzlies, as well as the elusive spirit bear—one of the rarest animals in the world. Packages are available for three-, four- and seven-night tours, offered between August and October.

• **Knight Inlet Lodge**, a floating resort located in the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest and accessed via Campbell River, welcomes guests to spend leisurely days viewing grizzlies and other wildlife. Two- and three-night packages are anchored around bear viewing in the spring, summer and fall—from the moment black bears and grizzlies emerge from hibernation to the salmon feeding frenzy that begins in late August. Guests tour the area by boat, allowing for prime viewing without disturbing the bears; however, during the salmon run, guests can watch from specially constructed viewing stands to see the action up close. Add-on activities include sea kayaking, where guests can glimpse grizzlies foraging along the shoreline, and an interpretive tracking tour that showcases bear signs and bear research. Tours are offered between May and October.

Whale-watching tours

• **Coastal Rainforest Safaris** leads wilderness experiences from PCA's destination at Port Hardy, in the territories of the Kwakwaka'wakw people. The Wildlife and Whale Watching tour takes guests for an exciting three-hour boat ride to spot humpback whales and orcas, as well as sea otters, porpoises and Pacific white-sided dolphins. To spend more time with the island wildlife, consider the Sea Otter Viewing and Whale Watching tour, which lasts six hours and covers a larger area.



Grizzly Bear at Knight Inlet. Photo by Sean Scott, courtesy Destination BC



Cultural ambassador in regalia in the woods on the Forest Walk in Whistler.
Photo by Blake Jorgensen, courtesy Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre

• **Sea Wolf Adventures** takes guests on whale-watching excursions through the Broughton Archipelago and the Great Bear Rainforest, while sharing the traditions and history of the Kwakwaka'wakw People. In partnership with Coastal Rainforest Safaris, the company offers a multi-day Whales, Otters and Grizzly Bears adventure, which combines a six-hour whale-watching tour with a

day of grizzly viewing in Port McNeill, along with two nights' accommodation at the Kwa'ilas Hotel in Port Hardy. The package is offered from spring to October.

• **Sidney Whale Watching** (located near PCA's destination at Victoria International Airport) operates on WSÁNÉC First Nation territory and the Salish Sea, home to transient

and resident orcas, humpbacks, grey whales, minke and fin whales. The three-hour whale-watching tour offers a 95 per cent-guaranteed whale-sighting rate; guests who don't see whales are welcome to join another tour free of charge. Other wildlife that make an appearance include porpoises, sea lions, seals and river otters. Tours run between March and October. 🌊



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Magical mushrooms?

An excerpt from Galena Bay Odyssey by Ellen Schwartz (Heritage House, 2023), reprinted with permission of publisher. Photos courtesy of Ellen Schwartz

In the '70s, Ellen Schwartz (along with many other disenfranchised youth) decided to go "back to the land." With her future husband Bill and their friends, they started their communal farm in the BC wilderness. Galena Bay Odyssey traces Ellen's journey from a born-and-raised urbanite, who was terrified of the woods, to a self-determined logger, cabin-builder, gardener, chicken farmer, apiarist and wood stove cook living on a homestead in the Kootenays.

In the fall of 1974, Bill and I noticed an influx of people wandering the woods of Galena Bay. (The increase totalled only eight or 10, but, considering that that more than doubled the full-time population, it could justifiably be considered an influx.) After making inquiries, we learned that the strangers were searching for pine mushrooms.

The foragers sold their haul to

buyers in Revelstoke, who in turn sold them to dealers in Japan.

"I've heard that the buyers in Revelstoke are paying more than \$20 a pound," he said.

"Twenty dollars a pound!" I repeated, looking at Bill. Regular white mushrooms cost about three dollars a pound in the grocery store, and thus, for us, were a rare treat.

Later, Bill said to me, "That's a lot of money for wild mushrooms. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"You bet. I mean, we wouldn't make a living at it . . ."

"No, of course not. But a little extra cash would come in handy."

Neither Bill nor I had ever foraged for mushrooms before, and naturally we didn't want to pick poisonous varieties by mistake. We consulted the Field Guide to Mushrooms of British Columbia and found out that pine mushrooms, *Tricholoma magnivelare*, grew at the base of lodgepole pine, Douglas fir and hemlock trees. They were often submerged under the soil and leaf litter of the forest, ranged in size from that of a plum to that of a grapefruit, and were shaped like porta-

bellas, but with a more pointed cap. Dense and meaty, they had a strong aroma and a resinous flavour.

The guide said that no poisonous mushrooms closely resembled the pine mushroom. That was a relief, but just to be sure, we checked out some of the bad ones. The false chanterelles were orange on the cap and the gills. The scarily named death cap had a much longer stem and a thinner cap. The blue-staining boletes were similar in shape but turned blue when bruised or broken.

Reasonably reassured, one cool, cloudy October day, we tucked the Field Guide into a rucksack, grabbed a couple of burlap sacks and hand spades, and set off to earn some easy money.

The bay part of Galena Bay is a west-facing, scooped-out curve in Upper Arrow Lake, which is part of the Columbia River. A peninsula of land delineates the upper part of the bay, and locals call that area Galena Point.

Bill and I had seen mushroom pickers in the woods along the dirt



roads that threaded through Galena Bay. We figured that few of those people would have ventured out onto Galena Point, so we decided to focus our search there.

By the time we arrived, it was about two in the afternoon. We followed a faint trail into the woods. The trail shortly disappeared, and we walked in the forest, pausing at each tree, looking for telltale white mounds on the ground.

I spotted a rounded hump at the base of a fir tree. "Here's one ... I think," I said. I dug underneath, loosening the soil, then carefully pried the mushroom up. Bill came over and broke off a small piece of the cap. We waited. Nothing happened. The cap and the piece stayed white.

"Whew," I said, and put the mushroom in my sack.

A moment later, Bill found one. We repeated the bolete test. Nothing turned blue. After a few more negative tests, we grew more confident that we could correctly identify pine mushrooms. We separated, walking from tree to tree. The mushrooms were hard to find, but there were plenty of them, and after

an hour or so, we had each filled half of our sacks.

"They're heavy," I said, slinging my sack over my shoulder.

Bill nodded. "Maybe we should head home."

"Okay. This is a good haul, huh? How many pounds do you think we've got?"

Bill held both bags out in front of him. "Maybe 20 in mine, 15 in yours."

"Thirty-five pounds!" I did the math. "That's seven hundred bucks!"

We grinned at each other. We hefted our sacks and looked around. We were in the middle of the woods. There were no trails, just the trunks of hemlocks, pines, firs and cedars rising all around us.

"Well, we know the lake is to the south. So, once we spot water, we can walk east and hit the road," I said. But, peering through the trees, we could see no sign of the lake.

"It must be about four o'clock, right?" Bill said. "So, if we can see the sun, we'll know which way is west."

But the sky was completely obscured by clouds.

"Which way do you think we came from?" I said.

Bill shrugged, pointing. "Let's try that way."

We did, scrambling over hummocks and down depressions and around rocks. Fifteen minutes later, we were still in the middle of the forest, and nothing looked familiar. Or, rather, everything did.

After another half hour of fruitless wandering, Bill said, "There's no sense schlepping all these mushrooms around. They're probably bruised and not worth much anyway."

"You mean dump them?"

"Well, not all of them. We can keep some to eat or try to sell."

We went through our bags, tossing out the most bruised and mangled specimens until we had emptied most of our harvest on the ground.

"There goes our fortune," I sighed.

With lighter loads, we set forth with new energy. Finally, at about five-thirty, when we could hardly see where to place each step, we stumbled on a faint path on the ground. We followed the barely visible path. The way ahead looked less dense, though it was hard to be sure in the gathering dark. The trees thinned, and we emerged into the clearing. There was our truck.

"Yay!" I shouted.

"I knew we'd find our way," Bill said. I looked at him and we both laughed.

At home, after taking off our filthy clothes and washing, and after I had scrubbed a couple of the mushrooms we had salvaged, I sliced and sautéed them, added eggs and cheese, and we sat down to our first pine mushroom omelette. The mushrooms had a strong, resinous, almost tarry taste.

"I don't like them," I said.

"I don't either," Bill said.

We dumped the omelette in the compost and ate toast and peanut butter for dinner.

"Should I save the rest?" I asked, looking at the 20 or so mushrooms sitting on the counter.

"They're not in very good shape," Bill said. "Probably no one will buy them."

We tossed those mushrooms in the compost, too. And that was the end of our pine mushroom money-making venture. 📍



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