



## A festival of food, wine and adventure awaits this month and year round in the Okanagan valley

**The Okanagan has** long been our summer playground, a destination for families to swim in warm lakes with sandy beaches and haul home cases of cherries and peaches from roadside stands.

That's all still part of the experience, but this sunny strip of the British Columbia interior has matured to become a food- and wine-lover's playground, luring savvy visitors and second homebuyers year-round.

Dubbed "Napa North," fine Canadian wineries stretch from the tip of Lake Okanagan all the way to the U.S. border, and Kelowna is the capital of this award-winning wine region, a small city with a tasty vibe.

It's especially exciting to visit during fall harvest season, when the grape crush is in full swing and the farm stands are overflowing with fresh sweet corn, heirloom tomatoes and tree fruit, and everyone is celebrating with fall wine festival dinners and tastings.

Some of the best chefs and food producers in the west have set up shop in Kelowna, mostly because it's ground zero for all of the fresh, local

and organic fruits and vegetables they want for their kitchens. Whether you dine downtown, in the historic Mission neighbourhood, or alfresco on a winery patio, sweet Okanagan peaches, local lavender, artisan breads and cheeses are always on the menu.

While it's not a large city — 125,000 people — Kelowna is an upscale spot, with a lot of resort property available. It's become a kind of "cottage country" for Calgarians, but it's not cheap. The latest Coldwell Banker home listing report has Kelowna second only to Vancouver in Canadian home prices, with the average listing price for a four-bedroom, two-bathroom home at nearly \$1.09 million. Still, after a flat 2010, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC) says buyers will benefit from an ample supply of listings and strong price competition in the market this year. Prices for multi-family properties have been slower to rebound than detached homes, so savvy shoppers may still find deals, especially in apartment condos.

But you don't have to invest in property to take full advantage of what Kelowna has to offer;

you can make the scenic drive from Calgary through the Rockies in a day, or simply hop a short flight for the weekend.

### EAT

Chef Rod Butters' eponymous RauDZ Regional Table is the place where local Okanagan farmers and their products are revered, whether it's the heirloom vegetables from Jon Alcock's Sunshine Farms or the artisan cheeses from Ofri Barmor at Carmelis Goat Cheese. Sitting at Butters' massive communal table, and admiring the portraits of his suppliers decorating the exposed brick walls reinforces the feeling of community and connection he's created here. Try Butters' signature oat-crusted arctic char, salmon BLT or poutine with chicken confit and squeaky Kebek cheese.

**Left** Verdant vineyards and orchards rise up from Lake Okanagan.

**Top** Taste award-winning wines at Ex Nihilo's winery, which opened last year.

**Above** Fruit stands and markets abound with dozens of varieties of apples.

**Top** Artisan cheese to pair with Okanagan wine.

**Bottom** The name “Gray Monk” comes from pinot gris, one of the first grape varieties they produced at the estate winery.

Cabana Bar and Grille serves regional, rustic food and drink, too, with a great open kitchen and a lively lounge. At night, get a table on the big patio near the firepit, or sit at the bar and watch the chefs flip pizza and roast Tuscan chicken in the forno oven.

At Hanna’s Lounge & Grill, located downtown, boaters arrive from the nearby dock for local wine and lakeside dining. Or try the Minstrel Café & Bar for a globally inspired tapas menu and live music. If a plate of homemade spaghetti and meatballs or gnocchi is more your style, Ricardo’s Mediterranean Kitchen has great family-style Italian food and a great selection of local wine.

Or just pack a picnic and head to the beach. Visit the farmer’s market on Wednesdays and Saturdays, or hit Illichmann’s Meats, Sausages and Gourmet Foods, the town’s lovely German deli, for all kinds of portable charcuterie.

## DRINK

With nearly 200 wineries in the region, and dozens right in or around the city, it’s easy to see why wine is the beverage of choice here.

During the four annual wine festivals — spring, summer, fall and winter — there are all kinds of events, from big public tastings to intimate winemakers’ dinners.

There are also plenty of winery tasting rooms to experience year-round, many featuring excellent restaurants and cool gift stores. Tourism Kelowna recently published a new *Kelowna Wine Trails* booklet, identifying several wine routes in and around the city and lots of interesting local history.

Classic winery stops include Mission Hill, the winery that won Best Icewine in the World for its Reserve Riesling Icewine in 2006; Summerhill Pyramid Winery, with its new-age pyramid aging cellar; CedarCreek Estate Winery, twice named Canadian Winery of the Year; Calona Vineyards, the original winery in the area; and Quail’s Gate, the pioneering Stewart family property with its brilliant pinot noirs.

Some of the valley’s top chefs are working at winery restaurants so, while you’re tasting, don’t miss the chic alfresco Terrace at Mission Hill, the organic fare at Summerhill and the gorgeous food (and setting) at Quail’s Gate.

Downtown, hit the bar at RauDZ for a huge selection of Okanagan wine by the glass, or some-



thing stronger — featuring local Okanagan fruit and herbs, of course — from its “liquid chefs.”

## SLEEP

Kelowna is a tourist town, so there is all kinds of accommodation, much of it right on Lake Okanagan.

A fun place for families is the Manteo Resort, with lakeside hotel rooms and full-service villas that give you a real home away from home.

History buffs will love Hotel Eldorado, a local institution in Kelowna. The “El” was built in 1926 by an Austrian countess as a luxury hotel. Slated for demolition in the late 1980s, it was saved by current owner Jim Nixon, but burned to the ground before it could be renovated. Nixon rebuilt the hotel on its original foundation, creating a near-replica with modern amenities and vintage charm. The lakeside boardwalk is perfect for casual summer dining, or go for a nightcap in the cozy bar.

## Eat

**Cabana Bar and Grille**  
cabanagrille.com

**Illichmann’s Meats, Sausages and Gourmet Foods** illichmanns.com

**Minstrel Cafe** minstrelcafe.com

**RauDZ Regional Table**  
raudz.com

**Ricardo’s Mediterranean Kitchen** ricardos.ca

## Drink

**Calona Vineyards**  
calonavineyards.ca

**CedarCreek Estate**  
cedarcreek.bc.ca

**Mission Hill Winery**  
missionhillwinery.com

**Quails Gate** quailsgate.com

**Summerhill Pyramid Winery**  
summerhill.bc.ca

## Sleep

**Hotel Eldorado**  
hoteldoradokelowna.com

**Manteo Resort** manteo.com

## Shop

**Carmelis Goat Cheese**  
carmelisgoatcheese.com

**Davison Orchards**  
davisonorchards.ca

**Kelowna Art Gallery**  
kelownaartgallery.com

**Okanagan Grocery Artisan Breads** okanagangrocery.com

**Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm**  
okanaganelavender.com

**Sun-Rype retail outlet**  
sunrype.com

## Out of Town

**B.C. Wine Museum**  
kelownamuseums.ca

**Big White Resort**  
bigwhite.com

**Kettle Valley Railway**  
kettlevalleyrailway.ca

**Silver Star Mountain Resort**  
skisilverstar.com

## Other

**Okanagan Wine Festival**  
okanaganwinefestival.com

**Tourism Kelowna**  
tourismkelowna.com



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**Top** The Terrace Restaurant at Mission Hill serves wine country fare to complement its wines.

**Right** Artisan Breads from Okanagan Grocery are a must for bread lovers.

### SEE AND SHOP

Even touring around Kelowna revolves around food and drink and a good place to start is the Guisachan Village shopping centre and the must-see Okanagan Grocery Artisan Breads, where you'll find Monika Walker's fat loaves studded with olives or swirled with peanut butter and jelly. Poke your head into her coolers for local chef Mark Filatow's soups and sauces, or a selection of Poplar Grove artisan cheeses.

A trip to Carmelis Goat Cheese and its lovely cheese shop is worth the drive — don't miss the goat milk gelato and tangy rounds of blooming Chabichou cheese.

There's a Sun-Rype retail outlet for bargain apples, or visit Davison Orchards, a farm shop that's especially fun to tour in harvest season. The Jammery puts that local Okanagan fruit in a jar — taste the raspberry jam with Kirsch or peach jam with a hearty breakfast.

Make sure to stop at the Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm gift store for beautiful soaps and creams, and to taste the lavender jelly, lavender ice cream and lemonade.

For local history, check out the B.C. Wine Museum in the historic Laurel fruit-packing house, with its VQA wine shop. It's in Kelowna's cultural district, which is also home to the Kelowna Art Gallery and great private galleries.



### GET OUTTA TOWN

There are plenty of active diversions outside Kelowna, too. Explore Lake Country (where real estate is considerably cheaper), camp and hike in Bear Creek Provincial Park or rent a bike and get out for a ride along the spectacular trestle bridges of the historic Kettle Valley Railway.

While it never gets particularly cold by the lake, in winter you can downhill ski and snowshoe in the surrounding mountains at the Big White and Silver Star resorts. There are 50 kilometres of groomed cross-country ski trails within a 20-minute drive of Kelowna. 